
Charleston's
SONS OF LIBERTY

Charles-Town, Nov. 21, 1772.

The FRIENDS OF LIBERTY

Agreeable to the ENGLISH CONSTITUTION,
Who are Members, and particularly the Stewards,

Of the C L U B N^O. 45,

The Meeting of which was adjourned to the Day whereon cer-
tain Advice should be received of the intrepid Patriot

J O H N W I L K E S, Esq;

Being advanced to the high Dignity of
L O R D M A Y O R of L O N D O N,

Are desired to meet at Mr. HOLIDAY'S Tavern, at Six o'Clock
THIS EVENING, to choose Stewards, and otherwise
prepare, for the Celebration of their sincere Joy upon so glorious
and important an Event.

Public Notice will be given, when the News is received, of
the Day appointed; and Tickets for Admission may in the mean
Time be had of JOSHUA LOCKWOOD, JOSEPH VERREE, and
MARK MORRIS, three of the former Stewards, and at T.
POWELL & Co's. Printing-Office, near the Exchange.

Announcement of a meeting of Artisans in "The South Carolina Gazette"

Charleston's
SONS OF LIBERTY

A
Study of the Artisans
1763-1789

By
RICHARD WALSH



University of South Carolina Press
Columbia, S.C.

J. T. (T)
W.
Rep. 2

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To

BETTY JEAN

and

JULIA MAUREEN

AUG 21 '69

HUNT LIBRARY
CARNEGIE-MELLON UNIVERSITY

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

- C. G.—Charleston Gazette*
C. H.—Columbia Herald and Patriotic Courier of North America
C. J.—South Carolina Gazette and Country Journal
D. A.—South Carolina Gazette and Daily Advertiser
E. G.—Charleston Evening Gazette
G. A.—South Carolina Gazette and General Advertiser
G. G.—South Carolina and American General Gazette
G. S. S. C.—Gazette of the State of South Carolina
H. J.—Journals of the Commons House of Assembly
J. H. R.—Journals of the House of Representatives
P. A.—South Carolina Gazette and Public Advertiser
P. R.—Public Records of South Carolina
R. G.—Royal Gazette
R. S. C. G.—Royal South Carolina Gazette
S. C. G.—South Carolina Gazette
S. C. H. [G.] M.—South Carolina Historical and Genealogical Magazine
S. J.—Journals of the Senate
W. G.—South Carolina Weekly Gazette

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Notes on Illustrations: The frontispiece and most of the illustrations scattered throughout the book were adapted from advertisements appearing in *The South Carolina Gazette* which is on file at the Charleston Library Society. The seal of the Charleston Mechanic Society is from a copy of the constitution of that organization at the South Caroliniana Library, University of South Carolina. The views of pre-Revolutionary Charleston and of Richard Moncreiff are used by courtesy of the Carolina Art Association, the Moncreiff miniature being at the Charleston Museum. The Fellowship Society pictures are used by courtesy of that organization.

FOREWORD

In 1800, Christopher Gadsden referred to the Revolutionary artisans of Charleston as "that useful body of citizens, whose worth, no man in the city, perhaps, is better acquainted with than myself." And, recalling the events of the era, he gave the mechanics due credit for much of the success of the rebellion in their port city:

From the first of, and throughout the revolution, none have shewn themselves more firm and steady in the most dangerous and trying occasions, in short, had it not been for their assistance, we should have made a very poor figure indeed . . .

In Charleston the mechanics were always an important and numerous class. Early records of the Province, as compiled in the Shaftesbury papers, made frequent mention of carpenters and coopers, carpenters to build the homes of Carolina's first pioneers and coopers to pack the products of the settlers for shipment to England and the West Indies.

As the colony progressed, the artisans increased and their occupations became more varied. In 1710 one authority estimated the planters to be somewhat less than three-fourths, the merchants about one-eighth, and the mechanics about one-sixth of the total population of the 12,000 souls. By 1770 Lieutenant-Governor Bull placed the white population of Charleston at 5,030 and, at this time on account of their numbers and influence, the artisans held equal representation with the merchants and planters on the first joint Revolutionary committee. Finally, in 1790, there were 429 master mechanics in the *Charleston Directory*, and there were

1,933 heads of families enumerated in the census of this year. Therefore, the master mechanics alone formed about 22 per cent of the free population of Charleston by this time. The *Directory* also indicates that they were engaged in a great variety of trades.

Despite their numbers, economic weight, and participation in the rebellion, the activities of the mechanics have been inadequately treated. With few exceptions, historians of the Revolution in South Carolina have ignored the significance of this class. Leila Sellers in her *Charleston Business on the Eve of the American Revolution* only mentions the artisans' importance in the low country. Furthermore, the author erroneously claims that the mechanics formed their "progressive party under the leadership of the discontented planters" and that "the mechanic arts" were little developed because of "the widespread employment of Negroes as tradesmen."

Such statements need reexamination. In the first place the three interested classes—the mechanics, the merchants, and the planters—consistently met separately to discuss their politics. Each group considered itself distinct and made alliances, counter-alliances, and compromises as interests dictated. The second premise is almost unreasonable; yet it has been adopted by the general historian. The influence of slavery did not retard the progress of the arts and crafts among the white mechanics in this period. On the contrary, the system seems to have been a positive aid to the development and success of some of the trades, notably cabinet-making, silversmithing, and building. Slavery presented a problem to the artisans, but not an absolute discouragement.

Edward McCrady in his histories of the Revolution, perhaps, has treated the group with more justice. He frequently refers to them as the first party to move in the direction of Revolution, but he merely describes some of their political actions and makes no attempt to explain motivation for their maneuvers. The mechanics are lost in the shuffle of political and military history. Charleston's craftsmen have been the forgotten men of the Revolution.

In general, this monograph on the artisans of Charleston will attempt to reconstruct the conditions of the times to understand the mechanics' role in the Revolution. More specifically, the author

will endeavor to answer some pertinent questions which must arise. As an articulate group, did the craftsmen have a definite program? If so, what was it? How did their policies coincide or conflict with the desires of the planters, the merchants, and the English? What were the artisans' business concerns? How much did these motivate their espousal of the Revolution?

Not the least significant, what contributions did they make toward the industrial and social advancement of Revolutionary society?

In answering these questions and in especially emphasizing the story of the artisans, it is hoped new light may be shed not only on South Carolina in the Revolution but also on the general history of events between 1763 and 1789. Historians of the era have said much about the planters, more about the merchants, and a great deal about battles. But "with the readers kind indulgence," as they used to say, let us talk about the "Mechanics."

Charleston's Sons of Liberty hardly represents the efforts of one person alone. All of my excellent teachers at the College of Charleston, the University of Syracuse, and the University of South Carolina have contributed in some way toward the completion of this study. I am indebted to the staff of the South Caroliniana Library, especially Mrs. Clara Mae Jacobs, Mrs. Cornelia H. Hensley, Mrs. Margaret B. Meriwether, and Mr. E. L. Inabnett for their assistance; the staff of the Archives Department, particularly its Secretary, Dr. James Harold Easterby, and Mr. William McDowell, Dr. Lowry P. Ware, and Mrs. Susan S. Padgett who brought to my attention many of the sources which shed light on the activities of the Revolutionary mechanics; Miss Virginia Rugheimer for permitting me to work with the manuscripts, newspapers, and pamphlets of the Charleston Library Society; the staff of the South Carolina Historical Society, particularly Dr. Anne King Gregorie for her advice; and the gentlemen of the Fellowship Society who allowed me to use their hitherto unopened archives and who have undoubtedly contributed greatly to the study of state and revolutionary history by making their priceless collection of records available through the facilities of the South Caroliniana Library.

I am grateful to Dr. Clyde M. Ferrell for his useful suggestions and to the late Dr. Robert L. Meriwether whose scholarship in Eighteenth Century America inspired the writing of this book. My thanks also go to Rev. Brian McGrath, S. J., Vice-President of Georgetown University, and to those of the University Alumni Annual Giving Fund whose kind generosity aided in the publication of this work.

R. W.
Georgetown University.

August, 1959.

Charleston's
SONS OF LIBERTY

I

MECHANICS OF COLONIAL CHARLESTON

The Charleston mechanics were not important alone for their Revolutionary and post-war politics. As builders of ships, manufacturers of silver, cabinets, and other wares, they were significant economically. Their crafts gave color to this cosmopolitan Revolutionary city. Their aims and the organization of their business stand out in an agrarian society. Unlike the merchants, they were anti-mercantilistic—the system forcing upon them competition with English artisans and distress in monetary matters. Like the agrarians, they were pressed with problems of slavery, finding in it on the one hand a boon, on the other a discouragement, to their labor and enterprise. All of these things, form a state of mind to be carried into Revolutionary and post-Revolutionary activities.

1. The Plain Mechanic of Charleston

Between 1760 and 1774, one of the most valuable and vigorous of the mechanic industries was shipbuilding. At this time South Carolina ranked about ninth among the colonies in the tonnage of vessels sent down the ways. More than 6,141 tons of ships including schooners, brigantines, sloops, and other ocean voyagers were completed by such busy wrights as John Rose, Paul Pritchard, and Robert Cochrane. John Rose, the most prominent of these men, was reputed to have amassed a fortune of £30,000 sterling at this business before the war, indicating that the trade was as lucrative as it was productive.¹

¹ Ship Registers, 1730-1765, 1765-1774, MS, South Carolina Archives Department; information on Paul Pritchard manager of the State shipyard, Journals of the House of

The work of Carolina shipwrights was excellent, and the use of live oak, which was readily available, made Carolina wrought vessels durable, but they were expensive. During the 18th Century the size of ships became greater, and there was a corresponding increase in their cost. At the turn of the century the price of a hull was about \$9 or \$10 per ton, but by 1788 it amounted to \$23.33, and at the close of the Revolutionary period, builders of eastern Massachusetts and Philadelphia were underselling Carolina's shipwrights by £2.5 sterling per ton. It was still the case, however, that many merchants of Glasgow, Edinburgh, London, and Philadelphia itself owned Carolina-built vessels, perhaps because of the good workmanship and the lasting materials of which they were fashioned.²

The tasks of the shipwrights were manifold. In addition to constructing new vessels, there were endless alterations and repairs to be made on the ocean carriers. When a ship came to port "her cargo was unloaded, her sails and rigging stored in some nearby loft and her crew lodged at the various ordinaries. She was then conducted to shallow water and careened by the aid of fall and blocks. Next a lighter, with steaming kettles of pitch and tar, was run up beside her bottom, so that negro workers could caulk up every leaky seam. After this the various groups of artisans had their turn, for glaziers were needed to replace the broken glass, iron workers to fit in new bolts, coopers to repair damaged hogsheads, sailmakers to patch the torn canvass, carpenters to make new hatches, or replace masts or spars which had gone overboard," and painters cleaned and painted the weathered woods of the ship.

Representatives, 1784 MS, South Carolina Archives Department (hereafter, S. C. Arch.), p. 31. February 2, 1784; Sellers, *Charleston Business on the Eve of the American Revolution* (Chapel Hill, 1934), pp. 62, 64.

Figures include all the yards in South Carolina; they do not include the tonnage of river craft constructed for inland transportation.

² Ship registers for 1730-1765 and 1765-1774; Victor S. Clark, *History of Manufactures in the United States, 1607-1928* (3 vol.; New York, 1949), I, 138, III, 367; Richard Champion, *Considerations of the Present Situation of Great Britain and the United States* (London, 1784), pp. 73-74. The price of labor was lower in Philadelphia than in Charleston between 1785 and 1795. This may have enabled Philadelphia wrights to undersell Carolina shipwrights (United States Department of Labor, *History of Wages in the United States* [Washington, 1934], p. 21).

If the shipwrights were not thus busied, they made parts for sale or sometimes prepared lumber for exportation.³

Coopering was also a gainful occupation in Charleston. During this period, the coopers, who carried on a lively export trade, sent overseas more than two million staves, hundreds of thousands of hoops, and millions of barrels made for rice, pitch, tar, turpentine, indigo, beef, and pork. Much of this work was done by coopers on the plantations, but a large proportion of it must have been turned out on the wharves of Charleston by men like David Saylor who employed as many as thirty people in his packing house in the city and Gabriel Guignard who built a relatively large fortune in cash and property by means of the craft.⁴

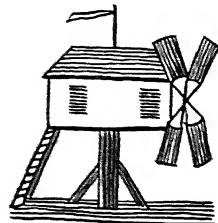
The cooper was a skillful artisan, for hogsheads and barrels had to be hardy to withstand the rigors of 18th Century oceanic transportation. Depending entirely on his adroit use of his adze, sun-plane, compass saw, and chamfering knife, the cooper prepared his staves then "set them in an upright frame, bound the lower halves together with truss hoops, steamed them to make the wood pliable, planed the inside with his howel, cut out the heads and jointed them with dowel pins, prepared the grooves with his croze, fitted in the heads, drove down the hoops with his hammer." His job was not easy in an unmechanized age and the output per man was of necessity small. Therefore Charleston, like the whole South, abounded in these craftsmen.⁵

³ Wertenbaker, *The Old South*, pp. 244-245. Though Wertenbaker writes about Norfolk, he assumes, as this writer does, that the method of ship repairing, above, took place in every colonial port in the South. The Charleston newspapers show that the port had a full complement of ship workers. The only exception here seems to be that upon embarking in Charleston crews were apparently lodged in the parish workhouse, *South Carolina Gazette*, October 11, 1760.

⁴ David Saylor Receipt Book, 1784-87, MS, South Carolina Historical Society, Charleston, S. C.; Anne King Gregorie, editor, *Records of the Court of Chancery of South Carolina: 1671-1779* (Washington, 1950), p. 570; Charles Joseph Gayle, "The Nature and Volume of Exports from Charleston, 1724-1774," *Proceedings of the South Carolina Historical Association* (1937), p. 31. Guignard is called a merchant and cooper in Arney R. Child's, *Planters and Business Men: The Guignard Family of South Carolina, 1795-1930* (Columbia, 1957), p. 3. A court record, however, refers to him as a cooper, Gregorie, *op. cit.* Another example is that of Thomas Rose, who kept shop on Motte's wharf (*S. C. G.*, October 1, 1763).

⁵ Wertenbaker, *The Old South*, pp. 245-246; Inventories of Charleston Wills, 1760-1785, MS, Charleston County Court House.

Candle making likewise was an essential trade. Between 1760 and 1785, Charleston had at least twenty-one chandlers who supplied the town with lighting, provided ships with their product, and exchanged quantities of soap and candles with the West Indies for rare wood, sugar, or the ever needed specie. Important as was candle making, the inhabitants regarded it as a nuisance since processing tallow produced foul odors and was one of the chief causes of fire in the city. Therefore, townsmen often demanded of the authorities that these enterprises be removed to the country. Little was done except to license and regulate these manufactories.⁸



Thomas Lumb,
(No. 67)
QUEEN-STREET
MILLWRIGHT, ENGINEER
and
JOINER

In tanning, the city had another industry which was engaged in overseas commerce. Between 1760 and 1775 more than 41,710

⁸ Wertenbaker, *The Old South*, p. 246; Gayle, "The Nature and Volume of Exports from Charleston, 1724-1774," pp. 32-33; Mary A. Sparkman, *The Charlestown Directory for 1782 and the Charleston Directory for 1785* (Richmond, 1951). Complaints were lodged against butchers, bakers, and blacksmiths for the same reasons (*S. C. G.*, June 8, 1765; February 22, 1773; Alexander Edwards, *Ordinances of the City Council of Charleston* [Charleston, 1802], p. 85).

sides of leather were exported from Charleston. However, because tanning necessitated large expenditures for tools, a mill to grind bark, and land for a tanyard, it seemed to be monopolized by a small number of prosperous artisans who possessed the requisite capital. This is verified in records left by the few men engaged in this business. Tanners like Samuel Jones, Solomon Legare, and James Darby were possessed of a considerable fortune in land and money by which they carried on their business.⁷

Leathermaking was also an arduous task. "The hide was first salted, then washed in large vats, then dried, then soaked in lime to remove the coagulated proteid matter, then worked over an inclined beam with a dull knife to stretch it and separate the fibers, then hung in a hot room to facilitate the 'unhairing,' then limed again, then gone over with the flesher's beam to remove fat, then washed again, then 'pickled,' then dipped in a solution of tannic acid made from the bark of oak trees. Finally came successive stages of currying—scraping, cleaning, beating, smoothing and coloring." Upon sending his product to market, the tanner generally received a deservedly high price for his trouble.⁸

Tailoring was also a lucrative and indispensable trade in the absence of a ready-made clothing industry. It was the tailor who clothed the inhabitants and created the colorful and fancy dress of the Revolutionary dandy, providing him perhaps with a scarlet coat with gold buttons or a velvet cape or a coat and jacket for his "servant Man." For the choice of such fastidious Charlestonians, as a rule, this artisan stocked his store with cloth which he imported from England, but an opulent customer might purchase finer materials in England through his factor, and then employ the tailor to fashion his garments.⁹

⁷ Gayle, "The Nature and Volume of Exports from Charleston, 1724-1774," p. 33; Charleston Wills, MS., typewritten copies, Historical Commission, Book A, XX, 74-75; Book A, XVI, 257-264; *South Carolina and American General Gazette*, May 25, 1778; *South Carolina Gazette and Daily Advertiser*, March 7, 1785.

⁸ "Method of Tanning Leather," *Universal Museum* (July, 1762), 389; Wertembaker, *The Old South*, pp. 252-253.

⁹ Petitions, accounts, and other papers of Charles Atkins, MSS, S. C. Arch.; Henry T. Thompson, *Henry Timrod: Laureate of the Confederacy* (Columbia, 1928), pp. 9-11. Also included in the clothing industry were hatters, milliners, and mantumakers (*South Carolina Gazette and Country Journal*, December 27, 1768; *S. C. G.*, May 2, 1761, June 28, 1760).

Shoemakers also served the people of Charleston and vicinity. Such mechanics as Patrick Hinds, John Potter, and Simon and John Berwick not only produced quantities of Negro shoes for the plantations, but also made men's shoes and boots, and ladies' and children's pumps for the white people. The Berwicks had, apparently, a large and efficient establishment. They supplied themselves with leather from their tanyard in Charleston and at one time advertised more than 1000 pairs of Negro shoes for sale. Similarly, Patrick Hinds and John Potter, kept a "shoe warehouse" in town. Unlike the Berwicks, they did not possess a tanyard but purchased materials from merchants. Other mechanics such as John Collum, Michael Keating, and one Keith also carried on extensive businesses, indicating that the Hinds' and the Berwicks' factories, even though seemingly operated on a larger scale than their competitors, did not monopolize the trade.¹⁰

Sometimes the cobblers advertised themselves as saddlers. More often saddle making was an important handicraft in itself. Such mechanics as William Edwards, Samuel Burn, Darby Pendergrass, and Peter Saunders manufactured not only saddles but harness, bridles, stirrups, whips, and other items and frequently repaired riding equipment imported from England.¹¹

The town contained a number of coachmakers. H. Y. Bookless, John Laughton, Benjamin Hawes, and Richard Hart were familiar figures who built chaises, chairs, and coaches "in the most complete and elegant manner," but most of their work involved the repairing of vehicles of English origin. Very often Charleston coachmakers purchased an old and worn coach, reconditioning it, and reselling it. Since the coachmaker was a wheelwright, he also offered spinning wheels for sale to self-sufficient farmers or planters who would twist their own yarn.¹²

¹⁰ *C. J.*, September 23, 1766; November 20, 1770; *S. C. G.*, January 21, 1773; Petitions, Accounts, and other Papers of Patrick Hinds, MSS, S. C. Arch.; for John Collum and Keith, *Royal South Carolina Gazette*, March 21, 1781; for Keating, A. S. Salley, *Register of Saint Philip's Parish*, 1754-1810 (Charleston, 1927), p. 352; Wertemberger, *The Old South*, p. 254.

¹¹ Charleston County, Clerk of Court of Chancery, Judgment Book Records, February 1767—August 1768, Book DD, MS, typewritten copies, South Caroliniana Library, pp. 130, 301, 302, 383, 384; also Judgment Book, 1770-1771, pp. 8, 10.

¹² Inventories to the Charleston Wills, 1771-1774, MS, pp. 540-541. Judgment Book, 1770-71, pp. 57, 58, 59; *G. G.*, November 14, 1766; *S. C. G.*, July 6, 1769.

There were also many gunsmiths on whom the inhabitants and the military forces depended to keep arms in good order. They made few weapons though they were capable of such work. Like the saddlers and coachmakers, they did repairing jobs almost exclusively and, since they were good tinkers, they offered the additional service to the people in making keys, locks, beams, and scales.¹³

The list of plain craftsmen was nearly endless. There were also barbers and hairdressers who provided the ladies of the town with the imposing styles current in London and Paris; perukemakers who enabled this generation to change the color of its hair at the slightest whim; powdermakers who manufactured their product for the wigs of the townsmen; weavers who wove woolen, cotton, and "Thread Cloth"; dyers who worked on silk and homespun and scoured gentlemens' garments; seamstresses, embroiderers, and mantuamakers who fashioned clothing for women and taught their art to young girls; confectioners who concocted palatable sweets; tobacconists who prepared delicate mixtures for discriminating smokers; brewers who brewed beer, imported the finest wines, and even sold water to the city-dwellers; upholsterers who hung draperies, supplied homes with curtains, repaired worn furniture, and made umbrellas and parasols; tinsmiths who made "fire-buckets," covered roofs, and maintained the street lamps of the city; bakers who prepared fancy pastries, bread and "ship-bread" orhardtack for seamen; and lowly butchers who rose to wealth by purchasing meat from farmers and reselling it to townsmen, to the militia, and to ship captains preparing for a voyage. Indeed it seems that at no time was Revolutionary Charleston without the benefit of any kind of tradesman.¹⁴

¹³ *G. G.*, December 30, 1774; January 6, 1775.

¹⁴ Alfred Cox Prime, *The Arts and Crafts in Philadelphia, Maryland, and South Carolina* (Philadelphia, 1929) and the Charleston newspapers for this period. However some examples are: Richard Bell wigmaker and hairdresser (*S. C. G.*, September 7, 1775), John Bothwell, perukemaker and George Robinson ladies hairdresser (*G. G.*, November 21, 1766, *C. J.*, February 23, 1768); powder and starch manufacturers, Robert Stringer (*S. C. G.*, October 18, 1773); weaver, Anthony Parasteau who maintained a small cloth manufactory with workmen from France, significantly during the Revolution when little British cloth was imported (*Gazette of the State of South Carolina*, June 9, 1777); dyers John Brown and William Brown (*S. C. G.*, June 19, 21, 1773, *C. J.*, March 18, 1766); seamstresses, mantuamakers, staymakers, milliners, John Burchett (*S. C. G.*,

2. *The Eighteenth Century Industrial Artist*

Among the industrial artists of Charleston, the cabinet-makers were of considerable importance. They were numerous and growing, there being 28 in 1760, 35 in 1790, and 81 in 1810. There were about 250 plying the trade between 1700 and 1825. Yet for all of this, little is known of their production. Only one business record still exists—this, the carefully preserved account book of Thomas Elfe, fortunately a leading cabinet-maker of Charleston. During the years, 1768-1776, from Elfe's shop alone came more than 1,500 pieces of furniture: bedsteads, chests, desks, clothes presses, card tables, tea tables, sofas, clock cases, book cases, all sorts of chairs, and so on.¹⁵

Apparently, keen competition took place among the many cabinet-makers vying for customers. Such is indicated in the advertisement of the irate Richard McGrath, who, as he said, "lately [had] been so fortunate as to discover the wretch, who for some time past has been mean enough to attempt injuring him in his Business, and whose ill nature and Prejudice have extended so far as to induce him to go to several Gentlemen's Houses and find Fault with his Work," but he hoped "That his Customers for the future will pay no Regard to the Words of such a low groveling, malicious Fellow, pregnant with impudence, Ignorance, and False-

December 7, 1767), Eleanor Chapman (*S. C. G.*, July 23, 1772), Sarah Damon (*S. C. G.*, September 28, 1765), Mary Darling (*Journals of the Commons House of Assembly 1765-1768*, MS, S. C. Arch., p. 577, March 16, 1768), John Duvall (*S. C. G.*, March 2, 1765); confectioner, William Sandys (*Charleston Wills*, Book B, 1774-1779, XVII, 467-469); tobacconists, Stewart and Barre (*South Carolina Gazette and Public Advertiser*, September 1, 1784); brewer, Edmund Egan (*S. C. G.*, November 26, 1772, November 22, 1773, February 21, 1774, *G. S. S. C.*, August 26, 1778), J. Brunton (*Charleston Evening Gazette*, August 8, 1785); upholsterers Richard Bird (*S. C. G.*, September 11, 1762), John Blott (*S. C. G.*, January 28, 1764), Thomas Brickles (*S. C. G.*, October 24, 1761), Andrew Burn (*Thomas Elfe Account Book*, MS, *Charleston Library Society*, Charleston), Ann Fowler (*G. G.*, February 10, 1775); bakers, Francisco Morrelli (*S. C. G.*, October 11, 1773), Moore, (*Columbian Herald and Patriotic Courier of North America*, May 30, 1785), John Meek (*G. G.*, April 24, 1767); butchers, James Boomer (*Proceedings of the Board of Police*, MS, *British Public Records Office*), John Baker (*C. J.*, June 3, 1766), Joseph Ball (*Charleston Wills*, 1769-1771, Book B, XII, 630-633); tinsmith, George Ross (*P. A.*, April 7, 1785).

¹⁵ E. Milby Burton, "The Furniture of Charleston," *Antiques*, LXI (January, 1952), 53-55; Jennie Haskel Rose, "Pre-Revolutionary Cabinet Makers of Charles Town," *Antiques*, XIII (April, May, 1933), Part I, 126-128, Part II, 184-185; E. Milby Burton, "Thomas Elfe, Charleston Cabinet Maker," *The Charleston Museum Leaflets* (Charleston, 1952), pp. 14-15, also, *Charleston Furniture; 1700-1825* (Charleston, 1955).

hoods, and who is too insignificant a Creature to have his Name mentioned in a public Paper, notwithstanding he has the assurance to call him [self] *The Ladies Cabinet Maker*.—He has therefore, by the above description, performed a Task for the Benefit of the Public, in Order that they may not be imposed on by a Person who is destitute of both Truth and Abilities.”¹⁶

An examination of pieces remaining in Charleston shows that the cabinetmakers worked in the same mode as the English masters, Sheraton, Heppelwaite, the Adams, and Chippendale. In some particulars, however, cabinetmakers like Thomas Elfe were evolving their own styles. He, who executed most of his furniture in mahogany, used secondary woods of cypress, cedar, and poplar, and developed singularly graceful frets on his works. Many of the bedsteads of other craftsmen had removable headboards so that a person might enjoy a cool breeze on a hot summer’s night. Some cabinetmakers carved rice ears and leaves on their bedposts, after the staple of the low country.¹⁷

The silversmiths were also noteworthy craftsmen of Charleston. Between 1760 and 1780, such mechanics as John Paul Grimke, Thomas You, Jonathan Sarrazin, James Askew, and Alexander Petrie supplied the inhabitants with jewelry, trinkets, and silver imported from England. But they also manufactured their own silverware, such as tankards, coffee pots, tea pots, punch bowls, ladles, strainers, and other objects. Those pieces which have survived the years reveal skillful execution in the manner of England’s craftsmen with whom the rococo was then popular.¹⁸

Oftentimes engravers were employed by the silversmiths, though they worked alone as well, producing coats-of-arms, ornaments, name plates, and so on. They also engraved plates for printing provincial currency. Presumably, Thomas Coram, one of these

¹⁶ *S. C. G.*, July 9, 1772.

¹⁷ Burton, “Thomas Elfe, Charleston Cabinet Maker,” pp. 13, 16-33; Burton, “The Furniture of Charleston,” 46-48; Rose, “Pre-Revolutionary Cabinet Makers,” Part I, 128, Part II, 185; Charleston County, Clerk of Court, Records of the Court of Common Pleas, February 1767-August 1767, MS, typewritten copies, South Caroliniana Library, pp. 88-89.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 223; E. Milby Burton, *South Carolina Silversmiths 1690-1860* (Charleston, 1942), pp. 14-16, 73-78, 146-149, 163-169, 203-206. Works of these silversmiths may be seen in the Charleston Museum.

artisans, who was frequently in the hire of the government, was a talented artist. He announced in 1776 that he had completed, for sale, a view of the engagement at Sullivans Island on a copper plate 10½ by 15 inches which was purchasable in color or plain. Coram, like many others of his craft, tried his hand at painting. A portrait completed about this time shows that he had marked technical skill in the classical school.¹⁹

Blacksmiths were undoubtedly the most versatile craftsmen of them all. Added to their ordinary tasks of shoeing horses, repairing wagons, and erecting lightning rods, was their iron working. Like their fellow craftsmen who emulated English masters, they copied pieces of wrought iron which wealthy planters or merchants imported from England, provided that these importations were simply done and were within their experience. The simple design of the imported altar rail of St. Michael's Church, for instance, set a standard which the smiths imitated in countless grills, balconies, and gates for which the city is still famous. Another aid was folios of engravings which were published by Robert Adam, the Scots architect, and which were used probably after the Revolution. Thus such men as William Johnson, Tunis Tebout, James Lingard, and John Cleator advertised that they performed scroll or plain work on railings for staircases, lamp irons, "and many other branches that are manufactured in Iron too tedious to enumerate."²⁰

Painters were also men of varied abilities. They were primarily house painters, of course, and for this work they offered for sale in their shops a wide variety of colors—Venetian red, blue verdure, carmine, Prussian blue, ultra marine, Naples yellow, Dutch pink, and so on. The painters also rendered coats-of-arms on coaches and other objects of family pride.²¹

Among the house painters were several artists and teachers of art. George Flagg and Benjamin Hawes taught drawing to the youth of the city for many years. In 1774 the limners John and

¹⁹ Prime, *The Arts and Crafts*, pp. 17-18.

²⁰ G. G., May 11, 1770; Alston Deas, *The Early Iron Work of Charleston* (Columbia, 1941), pp. 15-18, 27-30.

²¹ G. G., December 12, 1768, January 2, 1769.

Hamilton Stevenson opened a painting academy in which they offered the study of art, including all varieties of painting and drawing in the manner of the Roman School. They included work in crayons, in miniatures on ivory, painting on silk, satins, and fans. In the evenings they instructed mechanics in planning and architecture. The busy pair also stated that they would give lessons to any two young men, without charge, every year, on the recommendation by the South Carolina Society of the youngsters. The paintings of the masters themselves comprised such works as landscapes, historical scenes, and portraits.²²

Of the many limners, painters, and gilders who worked in Charleston before the Revolution, Jeremiah Theus was perhaps the finest of all. Arriving in Charleston from Switzerland about 1739, he commenced his labors a year later and continued to illuminate books, parchments, and script until his death in 1774. Theus was not an able landscapist, but he was a good portrait-painter. His drawing is notable for its accuracy, and his coloring is considered excellent. His paintings of women represent his best style, for he excelled in depicting their fine laces and draperies. He was trained in the Northern school, but typical of the colonial artist his work is primitive and his figures are stiff.²³

The last group of industrial artists were the builders—workmen such as carvers, plasterers, carpenters, bricklayers, and similar tradesmen. House carpenters and bricklayers were often architects who planned and supervised the building of Charleston edifices. Samuel Cardy and a craftsman named Gibson, who built Saint Michael's Church, were doubtless famous in their day, but there were other outstanding housewrights as well, like John and Peter Horlbeck, who built the Exchange, Timothy Crosby, Daniel Cannon, and James Brown.²⁴

²² Hawes declined the business of coachmaking in 1762 (Prime, *The Arts and Crafts*, pp. 9-10, 301; *G. G.*, November 25, 1774).

²³ City of Charleston, *The Charleston Yearbook for 1899* (Charleston, 1899), appendix, pp. 141-142, 146-147. Margaret Simons Middleton, *Jeremiah Theus: Colonial Artist of Charles Town* (Columbia, 1953).

²⁴ *C. J.*, October 20, 1767; *S. C. G.*, February 7, 1765; Rose, "Pre-Revolutionary Cabinet Makers," Part II, 128. Prime, *Arts and Crafts*, pp. 221-222; *H. J.*, 1765-1768, p. 658, April 7, 1768. Albert Simons and Charles Lapham, Jr., *The Octagon Library of Early American Architecture: Charleston, South Carolina* (New York, 1927), p. 19.

The housewright's methods of operation were not unlike those of present day general contractors. Revolutionary carpenters or bricklayers submitted their bids and plans to prospective employers, and upon acceptance they supplied all the necessary materials and hired skilled and unskilled labor to perform the work. In this manner such buildings as the Exchange, the Miles Brewton House, several churches, and various other landmarks of Charleston were erected.²⁵

As a building neared completion, the industrial artist was put to work. In the case of the State House, which was a source of pride to Revolutionary Charlestonians, after the ordinary bricklayers, carpenters, joiners, and plasterers were dismissed, one of the Stevensons painted the building; a gilder, Thomas Bernard, executed the King's arms while Thomas Woodin carved sixteen Corinthian columns in the Council Chamber. Similarly, some unknown housewright constructed the Miles Brewton House. Here, Ezra Waite, who was hired solely for the job of carving but who also advertised himself as a joiner, civil architect, and general house builder, did all the tabernacle frames except those in the dining room, the carving in the principal rooms, in front and around the eaves, and the Ionic entablature. Like a true artist, he guarded his reputation jealously, for when a competitor spread the tale that Waite had not performed this work, Waite promised the sum of one hundred guineas to anyone who could verify the claim of his rival.²⁶

The architectural styles of the more imposing buildings emulated the Georgian of England and their wood work displayed the Chippendale mode of carving with skillfully blended Chinese and rococo motifs. Ordinary dwellings differed somewhat from the European design. The builders generally adopted the house plans of northern Europe but made them suitable to the semi-tropical climate. Like those of the old country, Charleston homes had thick walls of brick, which incidentally were manufactured locally, but piazzas were added so that the inhabitants might find relief from

²⁵ C. J., October 20, 1767; H. J., 1765-1768, p. 527, February 23, 1768. G. S. S. C., May 12, 1777.

²⁶ H. J., 1765-1768, p. 527, February 23, 1768. C. J., August 22, 1769.

torrid weather. Often town residences had wrought iron balconies like those of the West Indies, and the overall plan of Charleston homes was altered again in that there were rambling servants' quarters, kitchens, and stables on the property.²⁷

Thus did the mechanics enrich the life of Charleston and the low country, giving it that distinctive, urbane, colorful existence so attractive in this period. In a few minor particulars, the styles of the old world were changed to meet conditions of the new, as with the cabinet-makers' rice ears and bed-steads and the rambling town houses of the houswrights, but for the most part, they were slavishly imitative of the English masters and thus tended to make Charleston a little London in America. Just as the planter emulated the English country squire; so also did the mechanic copy his English counterpart.²⁸

3. *The Mechanic in Business*

The mechanic of Charleston probably never realized that his skill would some day delight connoisseurs of the arts, curators of museums, and social historians. Instead of thinking of himself as an artist, he saw himself mainly as a man of business, and because these concerns largely motivated his Revolutionary activities, they must also be discussed.

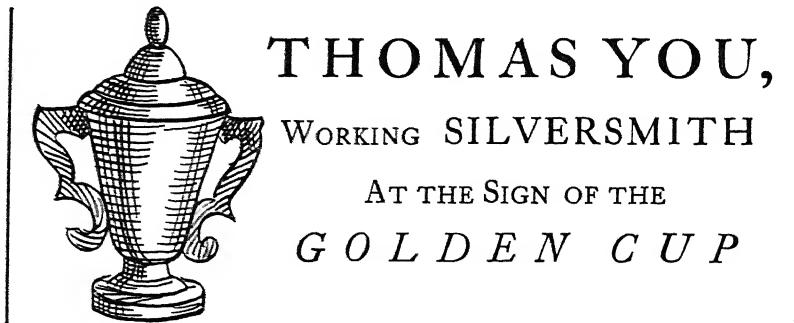
One group of mechanics combined merchandizing with their craftsmanship. They were shopkeepers who manufactured and sold articles in their stores. These manufacturer merchants included such craftsmen as cabinet-makers, saddlers, shoemakers, tailors, and coopers. Another group sold their labor, and rarely found it necessary to keep shop except as a headquarters, particularly if they employed a large number of people. These craftsmen were the carpenters, bricklayers, carvers, and so on.

In most instances the artisan was a sole proprietor. It was not uncommon, however, to take in a partner or two in order to enlarge operations, add skills to the business, or get rid of ruinous compe-

²⁷ S. C. G., July 12, 1773; Simons and Lapham, *Early American Architecture: Charleston*, pp. 19-23; Julia Cherry Spruill, "Southern Houses before the Revolution," *North Carolina Historical Review*, XII (October, 1935), 329.

²⁸ "Southern Furniture," *Antiques*, LXI (January, 1952).

tition. For example there is the partnership of Thomas Elfe and John Fisher. Elfe, one of the more opulent Charleston mechanics, offered the little firm his capital and ability, while Fisher contributed his labor and good craftsmanship, and undoubtedly, each eliminated a productive competitor. The coach-makers association of Hawes, Laughton, and Bookless is another example of the efficacy of combination: Hawes was a painter and gilder, Bookless, a wheel-wright and Laughton, a chaise-maker. Their advertisement, in which they refer to themselves as a "Company of Coachmakers," is interesting, but use of the word "Company" is of no significance.



There were no incorporated business establishments operating in Revolutionary Charleston. The "Company" is merely a partnership, formed obviously for reasons of adding skills. Their emphasis on the superiority of their product in price and quality over the imported is quite typical of all manufacturing mechanic advertisements. They write:

They can now advertise the publick, that they have brought all branches of the coach making business to such perfection, as not to exceed in quality the materials, goodness of the work or neatness, by any importation; so that they can make and finish, without any assistance, out of their own shop all sorts of Coaches, Chariots, Phaeton, Post Chaises, Landau, Currices, Sedans, Sleighs, in the most complete and elegant manner, and afford them at more reasonable rates that can be imported. . . .

Other partnerships of note were those of the blacksmiths William Johnson and Tunis Tebout, and the upholsters and cabinet-makers Edward Weyman and John Carne.²⁹

A shop was frequently a family concern. Thereby profits and trade secrets remained within the clan. Such a practice was illustrated by the brothers John and Peter Horlbeck, builders, and Simon and John Berwick, shoemakers. Wives took an active part in affairs also. When Edward Weyman became the Revolutionary politician, his wife Rebecca, a seamstress, took his place. Ann Hawes, spouse of Benjamin, the painter, carried on the trade with the aid of his employees, probably slaves, after his death. Before he died, she had kept a tavern.³⁰

The Revolutionary mechanic was ambitious, ever watchful of his interests and always ready to improve and extend them. Sometimes his shop was the headquarters of several businesses. A case in point was Thomas Nightingale, who advertised usually as a saddler, but increased his income by keeping a race track, conducting cock fights, loaning money at interest, auctioneering, renting wagons for carting, and "entertaining Indians" for the Province. It was evident from the many notices of professional accountants who offered to bring up-to-date and balance their account books, that not all of the mechanics' concerns remained in their simplest forms.³¹

Land was fairly inexpensive and plentiful. It was therefore the most popular investment of the artisans. If the tradesman's work was profitable, he speculated in town lots or, if he were more cautious, he built on his land and then rented tenements or stores. Henry Timrod, the tailor, profited from such operations as did Thomas Elfe, who dealt in town lots and in his will bequeathed

²⁹ The operations of a partnership, Kenzie Burden & Richard Muncrief, joiner and carpenter, are briefly described in Gregorie, *Records of the Court of Chancery of South Carolina*, pp. 608, 613, 616, 617; Rose, "Pre-Revolutionary Cabinet-Makers," Part II, 184; Burton, "Thomas Elfe, Charleston Cabinet Maker," pp. 11-12; *S. C. G.*, August 25, 1764, August 17, 1765.

³⁰ *C. J.*, December 15, 1767; *South Carolina Weekly Gazette*, March 15, 1783; *S. C. G.*, May 7, 1772; *G. S. S. C.*, May 6, 1784.

³¹ *S. C. G.*, April 12, October 15, 1763; January 28, February 25, 1764; *H. J.*, 1764, p. 40, May 25, 1764; *C. J.*, March 22, April 5, 1768; *G. G.*, April 26, October 28, 1774; Thomas Cooper and David McCord, *Statutes at Large of South Carolina* (10 vol.; Columbia, 1836-1841), IV, 142.

tenements to one of his sons, George, and to his daughter, Hannah. More than half the mechanics found working from 1760-1785 owned land either in the town or in the country.³²

The mechanic, despite his evident skill as a craftsman, was socially ambitious and frequently purchased plantation land, not alone for reasons of investment, but also as a means of entering the planting class. The examples of this were frequent occurrences. Silversmiths John Paul Grimke, Philip Tidymen, Jonathan Sarrazin, and carpenter Daniel Cannon were "Planter-mechanics." Cannon possessed a plantation just outside of town; in 1764 Sarrazin purchased 1,296 acres in Saint John's Parish, as a rice plantation; Grimke owned 500 acres of land on Edisto Island; and Tidymen also owned a plantation. Among the successful mechanics the practice was so commonplace that one is led to believe this is the cause of the disappearance of so articulate a group in ante-bellum South Carolina, which was virtually without manufacturing by the Civil War. The Revolutionary mechanics were absorbed into the agrarian society.³³

Shipping was another avenue of investment for a few artisans like Benjamin Hawes and George Flagg who bought a fifteen-ton vessel in 1763 and entered the coastal and West Indian trade, as also did Nathaniel Lebby, a coachmaker. Walter Mansell, a tailor, and George Sheed, a ship-plumber, were so successful that they became great merchants largely through their employment of a sixty-five ton vessel in the carrying trade. Other mechanics who participated in overseas shipping were Jonathan Sarrazin, Philip Tidymen, and shipwrights John Rose and Thomas Cochrane.³⁴

As an employer of their services and as a regulator of their economic life, the provincial government figured largely in the mechanics' business affairs. Aware of this, mechanics made use of the petition to the assembly as individuals asking for outright

³² *South Carolina Gazette and General Advertiser*, July 27, 1784; Burton, "Thomas Elfe, Charleston Cabinet Maker," p. 10. Thompson, *Henry Timrod*, pp. 9-11; Charleston Wills; Burton, *South Carolina Silversmiths*, pp. 12-210; Sellers, *Charleston Business on the Eve of the American Revolution*, p. 58.

³³ Burton, *South Carolina Silversmiths*, pp. 73-74, 76-77, 182-184; C. J., September 1, 1767; G. G., December 5, 1765; "Letters to General Greene and Others," *South Carolina Historical and Genealogical Magazine*, XVI (January 1916), 10.

³⁴ Ship Register, 1765-1774.

grants of money or as special groups desiring favorable legislation. Before the Revolution, while the planter and merchant classes were represented, the artisans were not—a thorn in their side and a situation to be improved by the Revolution.

Nevertheless, the Province was not unaware of their needs, and expressed desire to help them at times. The petition of Thomas Bartram, sole proprietor of a manufactory of chinaware, brought him public aid, and on another occasion, presumably at the request of the shoemakers, a law was enacted to prevent the exportation of leather, which apparently reduced the price of the material. Not unexpectedly the tanners objected to the measure and asked for repeal. However, the legislature answerd that if the levy were lifted, the price of leather would become prohibitive and thereby discourage the shoemakers.³⁵

Besides their resentment at not being directly represented in political affairs of the Province, the mechanics had additional grievances in that the government was extremely tight-fisted and slow in paying accounts after purchases had been made or services rendered. But it was the English system which gave the mechanics their worst problems and often lay at the bottom of their provincial governmental ills. Mercantilism operated directly against artisan interests. The colonies being subordinate to English commerce and manufacturing, a policy of repression of colonial manufactures which the mother country itself could maintain was practiced. Such policy is seen more in spirit than action. It is true that the iron act and the hat act, passed earlier in the century by Britain, does not seem to have directly affected the mechanics of Charleston. These acts, however, evidenced a disposition on the part of the mother country which was not at all favorable toward encouraging American manufacturing. A provincial tariff policy was out of the question. It is also true that the Charleston mechanics, as well as the American artisans generally, had not reached such eminence

³⁵ H. J., 1765-1768, p. 348, April 8, 1767; 1772-1775, p. 204, February 14, 1775. James Henderson, chandler, Thomas Nightingale, saddler, John Dodd, gunsmith, James Lingard, blacksmith, William Hall, carpenter, Richard Moncrief, carpenter, Barnard Beckman, blockmaker, George Sheed, plumber, John Perdriau, saddler, were some of the many artisans who were employed by the Province; others for example are listed in the tax act of 1764 (*Cooper, Statutes*, IV, 200-206).

of production that they rivaled the mother country on any grand scale, therefore bringing on antimanufactory legislation.

But this is beside the point. The ambitious mechanics hoped to reach that position; otherwise they were not typical of this generation of artisans. It was abundantly clear to them that they could not control their home market. Articles of English manufacture constantly poured into the Province: coaches, chaises, tin and foundryware, silver, shoes, saddles, cloth, pistols, etc., etc. Quite alive to the situation, the mechanics as constantly advertised their ability to surpass the quality and price of such imported articles. Many expressions in the artisans' advertisements indicate their awareness of the rivalry: "Better than imported," as "good as imported," and "cheaper than imported." Such claims are too common to indicate any other attitude. Also, as a further indication of this resentment, during the turmoil of Revolutionary politics, this group was always on the side of boycotts of England and other radical measures in general.³⁶

Although British mercantilism injured most of the mechanics, this system stimulated those few trades which produced goods fitting into the general plan of the mother country. Hempmakers were particularly aided by British bounties. A manufactory of hemp was, in fact, operating in Charleston before the Revolution. Coopers were also subsidized by bounties from England, and manufacturers of potash were assisted by the removal of the duty on the product when imported from the colonies to Britain. The London Society of Arts also helped the fertilizer makers. Imperial aid was likewise tendered the shipwrights by grants for making naval stores, bowsprits, meats, and yards, but these crafts represented only a small portion of the whole group of mechanic employments.³⁷

Monetary difficulties were another result of the imperial system. Acting in the role of creditor to the colonies, the British consistently tried to keep the value of money at a high level. There-

³⁶ Clark, *History of Manufacturing*, I, 14-24; *S. C. G.*, January 21, 28, May 17, 1778. E. Milby Burton thinks that furniture making was not hampered greatly by English importations since cabinet-makers' articles took up too much space on the small vessels of the day (*The Furniture of Charleston*, 44-45).

³⁷ Clark, *History of Manufacturing*, I, 24, 25, 33, 36.

fore, Britain forbade or only grudgingly assented to issues of Carolina paper currency. Carolina employed the subterfuge of issuing certificates for the payment of taxes, which was virtually a violation of British prohibitions since the certificates passed for money; but even this practice only partially alleviated the need for a cheap medium of exchange.

For the most part, all the mechanics, whether manufacturer or not, and the planters as well, were in agreement over the merits of a cheap currency which they needed to pay for tools, materials, labor, expansion, and for retirement of their debts. On the other side, the merchants of the province being creditors were naturally more prone to pursue the policies of the British, and for this reason they were often very hesitant to move against the Crown. Thus they found themselves facing the opposition of the planters and mechanics during the Revolution.

In fiscal matters, however, during this era, the artisans could at times sympathize with the advocates of hard money, for they too were creditors as sellers of wares and services. During stringent times, the mechanics were unable to collect their bills from the planters, yet the merchants pressed them for debts which they were therefore unable to pay. Caught between two fires, the artisans' financial position was extremely precarious. Before the Revolution, they stood on the side of the planters and found common cause with them on the question of paper money. But the mechanics' sentiments were likely to change according to their own best interest as happened after the revolt.³⁸

The credit economy resulting from shifting monetary polices was vicious, and the mechanics' notices in the gazettes almost invariably contained pleas to customers to settle accounts. The example of the watchmaker, jeweler, and silversmith Jonathan Sarrazin was typical. He informed his debtors not to "take it amiss if I call often upon them, as I must keep up my credit," and he added, for the sake of emphasis, "*my Worthy friends* must also

³⁸ Merchants Day Book, 1764-1766, MS, South Carolina Historical Society, Charleston, shows these transactions. Such simple goods and articles as tea, sugar, salt, shoes, books, and so on were bought by the inhabitants from this unknown merchant almost wholly on credit.

consider that the sun is very hot to walk in . . . I spend more time in collecting . . . money than earning it." On many other occasions, to induce customers to pay cash for their goods, the craftsman offered as much as an eight percent discount "for ready money."³⁹ He had to pay the merchant.

Labor was not less troublesome than the system of money and credit. Apprentices were commonly employed by the artisans. They provided cheap labor for at least four years, and each brought a fee of £20 sterling in payment for which the youth was to be faithfully taught the craft. Yet apprenticeship had many disadvantages for masters. As a worker the apprentice was but a learner, usually beginning his training at the age of twelve or fourteen years, he could not be assigned responsible tasks for some time. Often he was tempted more by the glamor of gaming houses than by the less intriguing work of the shop. So pressing was this problem that in 1762 the legislature sought to prevent the "excessive gaming" of servants, apprentices, journeymen, and overseers by fining the wayward ones. More annoying still were runaways of which there were many. There were few issues of the gazettes that did not contain a master's advertisement for the return of an apprentice who had deserted him. Sometimes forgiveness was offered if the prodigal would come home voluntarily, but not infrequently disgust was varied. "Whoever shall deliver him to the master," Weyman once wrote of an habitual perambulator, "shall receive a reward of Two Large Hand Fulls of Pine Shavings for their trouble."⁴⁰

Similar difficulties were encountered by owners of indentured servants, but these hands were often more skilled than apprentices; so masters frequently took advantage of the sales of such workmen. Acquisition of an indentured servant meant that a master crafts-

³⁹ *C. J.*, January 21, 1766. Offers of credit for example are in *S. C. G.*, October 29, 1763. Some tailors gave a 5% discount for cash (*G. G.*, January 22, 1768). Among Thomas Elfe's debtors were mechanics like James Oliver, Samuel Cardy, Edward Weymen, Tunis Tebout and others (Mabel L. Weber, "Thomas Elfe Account Book, 1768-1775," *S. C. H. G. M.*, XXXV [January, 1934], 15, 19).

⁴⁰ Advertisements concerning apprentices were always in evidence in the Charleston Newspapers of this period (Burton, "Thomas Elfe, Charleston Cabinet Maker," p. 11; Cooper, *Statutes*, III, 544-546, IV, 158-161; *S. C. G.*, September 27, 1768; Will of Robert Cripps, tailor, MS, South Caroliniana Library).

man could increase his output and perhaps decrease his labor costs or even add another "branch" to his shop. Thus a servant or two caused tanner Alexander Learmouth to advertise that he could supply leather cheaper "than any yet done," since he had supplied himself with indentured tanners and curriers from England.⁴¹

Master artisans frequently employed free white journeymen and a few poor masters lacking the necessary tools or sufficient wealth to enter business on their own account. However, free labor was scarce. Newspapers record that master tradesmen sent as far as England to engage some experienced workmen. Likewise the aid of free labor was not permanent. As soon as the fortunes of the penniless worker improved, he began business on his own. Similarly, the journeyman, whose status and time of service was no longer fixed by guilds, might enter the master class shortly after the expiration of his apprenticeship by obtaining a loan from a merchant, with which he could maintain a shop. Clearly the distinction between the journeyman and the master was marked by the ownership of capital and not by proven aptitude in the craft as such. But lack of skill accounted for gradations in pay and probably in social standing between the common laborer and the journeyman. In the carpenters' trade the laborer received about 8 shillings daily for his work while the journeyman was given about 45 shillings a day from which the master customarily took 17 shillings 4 pence as profit. It is interesting to note, however, that the legislature spoke of all workers on the same level when it prohibited the excessive gambling of apprentices, laborers, servants, overseers, and journeymen.⁴²

Because free labor was scarce, artisans resorted to slave labor, gaining from this system permanent if sometimes troublesome

⁴¹ *C. J.*, October 24, September 30, 1766. *G. G.*, January 8, February 12, March 18, 1768.

⁴² *S. C. G.*, November 27, 1762; January 1, 1763; January 28, 1764; January 7, 1773; August 25, 1774; *C. J.*, May 17, 1768; *G. A.*, November 1, 1783; November 13, 1784. Thomas Elfe often employed master upholsterers, carvers, and journeymen cabinetmakers (*Thomas Elfe Account Book*). Masters were employed by masters of related trades (Burton, *South Carolina Silversmiths*, p. 41). See also Appendix for wages. In New York there were no distinctions among free laborers, no guilds to maintain the relationship of journeymen and masters, and no prohibitions placed on employees becoming employers themselves. The relationship there was the modern one of employer and employee (S. McKee, Jr., *Labor in Colonial New York* [New York, 1935], p. 22).

workers whose wages and skill belonged to their owners. Among many examples of employers of blacks, was Thomas Elfe. His account book shows that at one time he owned six handicraft slaves who were evaluated at £2,250. They were variously trained as painters, cabinetmakers, and sawyers, and income from hiring them out about the town and country amounted to £632:16:2 in 1768, £405:19:00 in 1769, and £279 in 1770.⁴³

Other sources reveal the same practices. A court record indicates that carpenter Nathaniel Scott, in building for one of the townsmen, worked himself, some white carpenters, and his Negroes Ben, Cudgoe, and Harry. This combination of apprentices, journeymen, and slaves caused a master like Scott to become a contractor of no mean standing in his day. This was also true of David Saylor, a cooper, who had many slaves in his packing house and thereby made his establishment a moderately sized cooperage factory. Like so many of his contemporaries, Benjamin Hawes advertised that he could undertake any job as a painter by his use of white apprentices and Negroes.⁴⁴

The use of slave labor by the mechanics was prevalent. The census of 1790 listed 1,933 heads of families in Charleston of whom 1,247 owned one or more slaves. Of the 79 mechanics who left wills between 1760 and 1785, 37 specifically mentioned ownership of slaves. Among 194 artisans who worked during these years and who could be identified in the census of 1790 as heads of families were 159 slave holders. The newspapers of the time also show that the mechanics invested consistently in slaves. Often an artisan bought a slave, trained him, thereby enhancing his value, and then sold him, or the artisan might keep enslaved craftsmen to insure the support of his family after his death. A Charleston visitor described the situation in 1785, though perhaps in somewhat exaggerated terms: "I have seen tradesmen go through the city followed by a negro carrying their tools—Barbers who are supported in idleness & ease by their negroes who do the business;

⁴³ Thomas Elfe Account Book; Sellers, *Charleston Business on the Eve of the American Revolution*, pp. 103-104.

⁴⁴ Judgment Book, 1767-1768, pp. 224, 225, 226. David Saylor Receipt Book, 1784-1787; *S. C. G.*, December 3, 1764.

& in fact many of the mechanics bear nothing more of their trade than the name." ⁴⁵

Thus the mechanics, as much as the planters, committed themselves to slavery, but their sales of trained Negroes to planters, merchants and other people had undesirable repercussions. Artisans often found themselves vying for jobs with their former slaves whose non-artisan masters hired them out at prices far below those which were profitable to free craftsmen. Therefore, even slaveholding master mechanics were not completely satisfied with the system, and rising apprentices, journeymen, and newly arrived immigrants were certainly dissatisfied with slavery, for they found that it brought them unsteady employment and cutthroat competition.⁴⁶

To the mechanics these questions of slavery, mercantilism, manufacturing currency, and credit were of paramount importance during the era, and each problem must be kept in mind if the role of the artisan in the Revolution is to be fully understood. He disliked slavery and while it provided him with labor, it injured him, especially the laborer-mechanic. It was a problem he was saddled with through the period. Mercantilism, with its anti-colonial manufacturing and tight money policy, put him at a distinct disadvantage and placed him ordinarily on the side of the revolutionaries.

⁴⁵ *Heads of Families . . . 1790*, pp. 38-44. Charleston Wills; Inventories to the Charleston Wills; some specific examples are in *S. C. G.*, April 12, 19, May 3, October 18, 1773; *C. J.*, March 14, 1775; *G. G.*, September 19, 1774; Burton, "Thomas Elfe, Charleston Cabinet Maker," pp. 7-10, 12-13. Joseph W. Barnwell, "Diary of Timothy Ford, 1785-1786," *S. C. H. G. M.*, XIII (July, 1912), 142.

⁴⁶ *C. J.*, June 3, 1766. For an early conflict among the artisans themselves see Yates Snowden, "Labor Organizations in South Carolina," *Bulletin of the University of South Carolina*, No. 38, Part IV (July, 1914), pp. 5-9. Charleston Wills; Inventories to the Charleston Wills. Rose, "Pre-Revolutionary Cabinet Makers of Charles Town," Part II, p. 184. Sellers, *Charleston Business on the Eve of the American Revolution*, p. 58. *S. C. G.*, December 29, 1760; January 25, 1770; July 17, August 27, September 24, October 29, 1772; Mabel L. Weber, "Josiah Smith's Diary, 1780-1781, *S. C. H. G. M.*", XXXIV (April, 1933), 69.

II

PREPARATION FOR REVOLUTION

The turbulent 1760's bettered the mechanics' political position. In that decade, their sometimes violent opposition to and invariable resistance of British constitutional deviation earned them recognition. Their own economic discontent together with planter irritation at British hard money policy readied avenues of resistance and alliance against the merchants who by 1767 indicated reluctance to throw the province against the mother country. By 1770, however, the mechanics and their radical friends, among whom Gadsden was the most outstanding, went down to defeat after the repeal of the Townshend Act and consequent loss of public opinion and unity of effort with the other colonies—the artisans program of "encouragement to manufacturing" and the general constitutional question notwithstanding.

1. The Mechanic and His Government

According to the electoral act of 1721 a townsman was required to pay only 20 shillings currency in taxes for the privilege of casting a ballot. Therefore most artisans could vote, but their participation in legislation was limited to this. Craftsmen did not sit in the General Assembly though there were many who were qualified. No ordinance excluded them from office except the unwritten law of custom which dictated, in effect, that the merchants, planters, and professional men, members of the upper order of the British-Carolinian society, were the lawmakers of the province. Carolinians were not represented at this juncture proportionate to population but according to status and interest. Therefore the artisto-

cratic wealth of the low country, represented by merchants and planters, dominated legislative policy and voiced their opinions, with the back country a mere whisper, and the mechanics not heard at all. " 'Tis true they have a house of assembly: but who do they represent," queried Josiah Quincy observing South Carolina pre-revolutionary politics, "the laborer, the mechanic . . . the farmer, husbandman or yeoman? No, The representatives are almost if not wholly rich planters. The Planting interest is therefore represented but I conceive nothing else (*as it ought to be*)."¹ In this "virtual" representation, the mechanics desired, and indeed, needed participation.

In the General Assembly the disadvantages for the mechanics were obvious. When the interests of the classes conflicted, the ruling group favored their own kind. Though partiality was shown infrequently, the artisans had to exercise extreme caution during elections so that they would have a spokesman, from whose "connections . . . and from whose Principles," as a craftsman said, they had "reason to expect the greatest assistance."²

However, the mechanics had some means of expressing their sentiments, either by petition or by membership on the Grand Jury for which they were eligible if they had paid at least £5 in taxes. During this period, men like John Rose, shipwright, Kinsey Burden, carpenter, Timothy Crosby, bricklayer and builder, Darby Pendergrass, tailor, and Thomas Elfe, cabinetmaker, often served on these bodies. Besides examining bills of complaint filed against accused persons, jurymen recommended legislation to the assembly. In the form of "grievances," it usually concerned the need for honest observance of Negro laws, better marketing regulations, or other ordinances necessary for an orderly city.³

¹ Cooper, *Statutes*, III, 135-140; social attitudes are clearly expressed in William Henry Drayton, *Letters of Freemen* (London, 1771), p. 61 *et passim*. Between 1755 and 1773, the rate of exchange of Carolina paper currency for British sterling was about £7 paper for £1 sterling (D. D. Wallace, *The Life of Henry Laurens* [New York, 1915], p. 53). All amounts of money in this work are in currency unless otherwise noted. John C. Miller, *Origins of the American Revolution* (Boston, 1943), p. 55.

² "A Craftsman," "The Good Old Cause of Liberty," *S. C. G.*, April 4, 1774; October 5, 1765.

³ *S. C. G.*, February 7, April 18, 1771, May 17, October 31, 1774.

Although numerous in the town, the artisans played only a minor role in the management of its affairs. The parishes of Saint Philip's and Saint Michael's, which constituted Charleston, were administered respectively by two wardens and seven vestrymen who were elected every Easter Monday by the parishioners and who were charged with supervising the workhouse, elections, and education, the last including apprenticeship. The wardens and vestrymen also elected a commission to care for the poor. Other officers of the parish, appointed by the assembly, were commissioners of the roads, the fire commissioners, sealers of weights and measures, and the packing inspectors.⁴

Prominent merchants and planters of the city always held the post of warden while the mechanics were incumbents of less important offices upon occasion and, before 1775, never in the majority on any of the parochial commissions. For example, some of the mechanic office holders were Daniel Cannon who was elected vestryman in 1774; Edward Weyman who was appointed clerk of Saint Philip's in 1766; John Remington, junior, a tailor, who was one of three coal measurers, and John Blackie, a cooper, who became one of the packers in 1774.⁵

Evidently the city was badly governed under the old system. There were too many parochial commissions none of which was granted sufficient executive authority, and frequently affairs were unattended by the busy assembly naturally concerned with the entire province and imperial relationships, especially at this time. Accordingly, in 1765, a tradesman reflected the dissatisfactions of townsmen when he lamented the inability of the commissioners of weights and measures to prevent engrossing and forestalling. Further, he advised his fellow inhabitants: "Let us therefore directly instruct our Representatives: petition the General Assembly for a proper law; apply for an Act to incorporate the Town."⁶

The mechanics' aim at incorporation was achieved at the end of the Revolution. In 1783 Charleston was accorded corporative

⁴ Edson L. Whitney, "Government of the Colony of South Carolina," *Johns Hopkins University Studies in Historical and Political Science* (Baltimore, 1895), pp. 69-73, 73-74, 80-81; Cooper, *Statutes*, III, 544.

⁵ *S.C.G.*, April 11, 1774.

⁶ *Ibid.*, February 2, 1765; June 3, 1774.

standing. With this event, the artisans, by then well known for their Revolutionary activities and perhaps better trusted despite their "plebian views," served as councilmen and began to wrestle with their own and more general urban problems. In the larger sphere of state politics, the democratizing effect of events permitted the aspiring, politically minded tradesmen to sit in the assembly with their former social superiors.

2. The Founding of the Mechanics Party

In the early 1760's because of the failure of immigrants from Europe to remain on their bounty land, the migration of impoverished settlers from neighboring colonies, and the plight of women and children left destitute by the French and Indian War, Charleston was confronted with a serious social problem—indigence. Townsmen complained to the legislature that unfortunates were consigned to the workhouse, where space was available only for "the reception of part" of them. Daily "Correcting of Slaves, and a continual Notice and Disturbance, Cursing and Swearing from the Seamen and others confined there" were common.⁷ As a result, the provincial government passed an act to build a new poor house, erect a hospital, and revise the old regulations dealing with the poor. However, the law was not approved until 1768.⁸

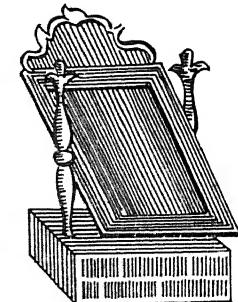
These hardships brought a certain social consciousness to the mechanics which was translated into political action. To solve such difficulties, the Fellowship Society was organized in 1762, under the leadership of Edward Weyman, Daniel Cannon, James Brown, a carpenter, and Joshua Snowden, a hatter. Four years later, the society came to grips with their local troubles and addressed the legislature for incorporation, giving the reason that they desired "to afford Relief to many poor distressed persons in this province" who were without benefit of "regular advice, attendance, Lodging, Diet, and medicines" and who labored under various disorders of body and mind. This "Inconveniency might happily be removed

⁷ H. J., 1765-1768, pp. 213-214, November 25, 1766; 343-344, April 6, 1767. In 1747, the poor tax was £1,200; in 1763, £6,143.

⁸ *Ibid.*; Cooper, *Statutes*, IV, 293, VII, 90-93.

by collecting them into one convenient hospital." They were duty bound through that "distinguishing faculty Reason . . ." that where real need was known to oppress people "of what climate, Nation or Religion they be," they were under "strictest ties of Social Duty to Relieve them."⁹

The membership and funds of the society grew, but the laudable aspirations, in which the founders indicated their affection for the eighteenth century cult of reason, like most rebels, never came to fruition. The society aided the town's poor and their own members, and annually arranged for the education of young scholars. Probably their agitation was instrumental in securing passage of the Act of 1768.¹⁰



At WEYMAN's
*Looking-Glass Shop
in Church-Street*

More important, the Fellowship Society was founded by artisans who were to prove avid proponents of American rights in 1765. The first president, Edward Weyman, together with Cannon, Johnson, George Flagg, the artist, later appear among the leaders of the radicals. In the crisis of 1765, as members of the Charleston Fire Company, this same group was active in defending the American position and seemed quite as adept at starting political fires as at extinguishing actual ones.

⁹ Rules of the Fellowship Society, 1762, MS, Fellowship Society, Charleston, South Carolina; M. J., 1765-1768, pp. 177-178, June 24, 1766; 1769-1771, pp. 55-65, June 19, 1769; 83, July 26, 1769.

¹⁰ Minute Book of the Fellowship Society, 1769-1779, Rules of Fellowship Society, 1762, and Treasurers Account Book, 1774-1815, MSS, Fellowship Society. Edward McCrady, *Education in South Carolina prior to and during the Revolution* (Charleston, 1883), p. 33.

Apparently, even before the Stamp Act, the mechanics were united for political as well as benevolent purposes.¹¹ Sometime between 1765 and 1768 they formed the John Wilkes Club, of a decided political nature and notable by Peter Timothy as nominating candidates for the assembly:¹²

Mechanicks and other inhabitants of Charles-Town, [met] at Liberty-Point, on Saturday last the 1st instant, to consult each other upon the choice of proper persons to represent them, at this important conjuncture, in the ensuing Assembly, the following gentlemen's names were put up, v. z.

For St. Philip's Parish	For St. Michael's
Christopher Gadsden	Benj. Dart
Thomas Smith, sen.	Tho. Smith
Hopkin Price	Esquires
Henry Laurens	Thomas Savage
Charles Pinckney	Mess. { F. Ward, merch.
	{ John Lloyd

when a great majority appeared in favor of the first three on each list. This matter being settled, without the least animosity or irregularity, the company partook of a

¹¹ The list of persons who opposed the Stamp Act and the Declaratory Act and the early membership of the Fellowship Society contain many of the same names. In the roster of the former the names of the latter are marked with an asterisk as follows: Christopher Gadsden, merchant; William Johnson,* blacksmith; Joseph Verree, carpenter; John Fullerton,* carpenter; James Brown,* carpenter; Nathaniel Lebby, ship carpenter; George Flagg,* painter; Thomas Coleman,* upholsterer; John Hall, coachmaker; William Field,* carver; Robert Jones, saddler; John Laughton,* coachmaker; U. Rodgers,* wheelwright; J. Barlow, saddler; Tunis Tebout, blacksmith; Peter Munclean,* clerk; Wm. Trusler,* butcher; Robert Howard,* carpenter; Alexander Alexander,* schoolmaster; Edward Weyman,* clerk of St. Philip's Church and glass grinder; Thomas Swarle, painter; William Laughton, tailor; Daniel Cannon,* carpenter; Benjamin Hawes,* painter; John Calvert,* clerk; H. Y. Bookless,* wheelwright. This list of people at the meeting at the Liberty Tree, in 1766, was drawn up by George Flagg (*Rules of the Fellowship Society*; R. W. Gibbes, *Documentary History of the American Revolution, 1764-1776* [New York, 1855], pp. 10-11). Also these meetings at Liberty Tree were public meetings and continued as such during the Revolutionary period.

Many of the men of the meeting of 1766 were partners during the period. They were Johnson and Tebout; Weyman and Coleman; Hawes and Flagg; Hawes, Laughton, and Bookless; Hawes and Coleman; Rogers, Laughton, and Hawes (*S. C. G.*, September 8, 1766; December 15, 1767; *supra*. p. 24). Before the Revolution, the artisans desired political office (*H. J.*, 1769-1771, p. 28, June 4, 1769; 1772-1775, pp. 184-185, January 25, 1775; 1776, p. 44, May 29, 1764).

¹² *S. C. G.*, October 3, 1768. Through the 1770's the Fellowship Society added members of the other classes, merchants and planters (*Minute Book*, 1769-1779). Perhaps, this is one of the reasons for the mechanics founding the Wilkes Club and the Palmetto Society.

plain and hearty entertainment, that had been provided by some upon whom this assembly will reflect lasting honour.

About 5 o'Clock they all removed to a most noble LIVE OAK tree, in Mr. Mazyck's pasture, which they formally dedicated to LIBERTY, where many loyal, patriotic, and constitutional toasts were drank, beginning with the glorious NINETY-TWO Anti-Rescinders of Massichusetts-Bay [sic], and ending with, unanimity among the members of our ensuing Assembly not to rescind from the said resolutions [to boycott England], each succeeded by three huzzas.

In the evening, the tree was decorated with 45 lights, and 45 sky-rockets were fired. About 8 o'Clock, the whole company, preceeded by 45 of their number, marched in regular procession to town, down King-street and Broad-street, to Mr. Robert Dillon's tavern; where the 45 lights being placed upon the table, with 45 bowls of punch, 45 bottles of wine, and 92 glasses, they spent a few hours in a new round of toasts, among which, scarce a celebrated Patriot of Britain or America was omitted; and preserving the same good order and regularity as had been observed throughout the day, at 10 they retired.

Since the above meeting, notwithstanding the general supineness that before prevailed, great diligence is used in canvassing, and interest making, by the friends of the different candidates, as well by others as by the Mechanicks.

Christopher Gadsden and the mechanics were fast friends by the time this "convention" was called, having joined forces because of the Stamp Act, their ideas on opposition to Britain and national unity apparently coinciding. Gadsden became their great "spokesman" and invariable candidate until his break with them in 1778. Their "spokesman" best describes the relationship as there is abundant evidence that they had their own leaders in Weyman, Johnson, Cannon and others who were more naturally in complete sympathy with the group's views. Men like Gadsden, however, were useful and politically potent and, as highly respected statesmen, gave the mechanics' desires patrician respectability. During the

Confederation, when Gadsden could not agree with their rioting and Tory-baiting, Alexander Gillon, merchant, commander of the South Carolina "Navy," and post war politico, became the favorite of the mechanics. There is little evidence that the mechanics, who constituted the core of the Revolutionary mob, were set in motion like puppets by radical aristocrats. The mechanics' party had a mind of its own, which was subject to change when it found policy disagreeable.¹³

The Wilkes Club passed out of existence with independence. In 1778 a new organization, the Palmetto Society, found these inveterate joiners together, with men like Flagg and Johnson as officers, now ardently devoted to relieving veterans of the Revolution and, in general, democratizing South Carolina in the postwar period.

3. The Burden of Taxation

The act which caused the greatest outbreak of lawlessness in Charleston since 1719 was part of a new British imperial policy begun at the close of the French and Indian War. Britain had greatly enlarged her empire at the expense of France, but there was "a reverse side of the shield." The conflict had cost an enormous sum, nearly £140,000,000 sterling, the payment of which became the problem of the day. For the answer to this question, the British looked to the colonies, for after all they had benefited from the English triumph and therefore they should pay their share of the bill.¹³

The Americans felt differently about the matter. Like their brother colonists, Carolinians argued in 1765 that they were unable to bear any further taxes. They maintained that they had contributed men and money toward winning the war and any additional taxes would be excessive and would drain them of specie of which there was always a shortage in the province.¹⁴

They sincerely believed they were heavily taxed. For example, the tax Act of 1760 required payment of 35 shillings on each slave,

¹³ F. E. Whitton, *War of Independence* (New York, 1931), p. 17. Miller, *Origins*, p. 120.

¹⁴ H. J., 1765, pp. 16-18, November 26, 1765.

17 shillings 6 pence per centum on the value of town lots, wharves, and buildings. They were also assessed 17 shillings 6 pence per hundred pounds on every note bearing interest "over and above what they pay interest for," 5% on all annuities, and 17 shillings 6 pence per hundred pounds on the profits of all the professions, faculties, factorage, and handicraft trades. Reductions in subsequent tax acts were negligible so that during the years between 1760 and 1765 Carolinians paid more in taxes than ever before.¹⁵

Wrangles in the provincial legislature caused taxes to become due at a critical time. By virtue of a legislative deadlock, enactment of the money bill for 1763 was prevented. The bill of 1764 became the highest tax act to that date, and it was scheduled for payment in May, as was the levy for that year. The fear of additional taxation was very real in the Province.¹⁶ At the same moment, the residents of Charleston complained that townsmen bore the heaviest tax load in the Province. Between 1760 and 1764, the costs of government, they asserted, were £827,985:18:11, and of this, the city dwellers paid £204,918:16:6. Lots, houses, wharves, and other properties were assessed according to their value. Improvement on them raised taxes proportionately. Also the inhabitants said that they paid about one-fourth the land taxes of the Province and no similar burdens rested on the agriculturists, nor were there apparent any comparative charges on the stock in trade of countrymen, nor on their profits, or on their gains from handicraft trades, since such work was done by enslaved craftsmen on the plantations.¹⁷

Despite the situation of the colonists and warnings by their agents, the British Parliament passed the Stamp Act on March 22, 1765, making it effective in the fall of the same year. This measure touched the pocketbook of every inhabitant in the Province, but the heaviest load fell upon the townsmen, especially the lawyers,

¹⁵ Cooper, *Statutes*, IV, 129, 190, 214-215, 299; Acts Number 909, 925, MSS, S. C. Arch.

¹⁶ Cooper, *Statutes*, IV, 193, 206, 218, 228, 234-236. A bill was passed in March, 1766 to postpone payment of the tax of 1765. In addition to the assessments described were added the charges for maintaining the poor.

¹⁷ H. J., 1768-1769, p. 382, April 16, 1767; 1769-1771, pp. 276-280, February 22, 1770, 325-326, March 15, 1770.

and on printers and other craftsmen. Barristers were angered because stamps were required for almost all legal documents, and the ire of printers was aroused because newspapers, books, pamphlets, and almanacs could not be sold without stamps. The master mechanics' means of securing labor were heavily taxed as the act prescribed a stamp of 2 shillings 6 pence sterling on all indentures. The price of a stamp for negotiating agreements with apprentices was £7 currency and represented more than half the weekly earnings of mechanic, whose average wage was between 30 and 45 shillings currency per day and, at the most, between £10:6 and £13:10 currency per week.¹⁸

Carolinians protested the Stamp Act in no uncertain terms, and the worst disorders since 1719 erupted in Charleston where the most violent opposition took place. Here the mechanics under Christopher Gadsden attacked the tax.

During 1765 the mechanics and Gadsden experienced a meeting of minds over taxation, imperial rule, and the constitutional rights of Englishmen in America. The sometimes intemperate but always able Gadsden harbored grievances as far back as the Cherokee War. At that time, he criticised the English Colonel James Grant's conduct of the campaign against the Indians with a severity which earned enmity in royal circles while the mechanics very likely agreed with his barbs. Several were members of the Charleston Battalion of Artillery under Gadsden's command in the Cherokee outbreak. Shortly after the war, Gadsden was again in the anti-British limelight when the royal governor unsuccessfully attempted to unseat him in the commons. Gadsden recoiled at this infringement on British rights:

Will it be asserted by any friend to the natural liberties of British subjects, that, in order to retain those liberties, a man must never stir out of Britain, where they are *indisputably* and essentially his; or that the moment he sets foot on American ground, he has bid farewell to the *dearest* of them? If this had been the doctrine formerly, the sons of Britain would

¹⁸ Appendix.

have been thinly, very thinly, scattered on this side of the Atlantic Ocean. It might indeed have been *then* fixed on, *very properly*, as a place to transport her convicts to. But surely no free men, on such conditions, would have ever thought of coming to America. Those nations only, who were already enslaved, therefore could lose nothing by the bargain, would certainly have been found almost, if not altogether, the only adventurers this way.¹⁹

The mechanics found Gadsden an enlightened teacher on the constitutional question. His stand buttressed their economic desires and Gadsden won a powerful bloc of votes from Charleston.²⁰

Thus, the alliance was advantageous to the mechanics as well as Gadsden. He was a brilliant radical of the day and largely as a result of his work in the assembly, he was sent with John Rutledge and Thomas Lynch to the Stamp Act Congress in New York where the colonial representatives convened in order to obtain repeal. There Gadsden reached his zenith by advocating a program of colonial unity and, with the other representatives, employing the doctrine of the "natural and inherent rights . . . of Englishmen" against taxation without consent of their elected representatives.²¹

While Gadsden was attending the Congress, on the 18th of October the ship the Planter's Adventure arrived at Charleston and anchored under the guns of Fort Johnson. The rumor quickly circulated that a stamp officer and stamp papers were aboard the vessel. There began, in Governor Bull's description, "Some very extraordinary and universal commotions in the town." He said that "by the artifices of some busy spirits the minds of men . . . were . . . universally poisoned with the principles which were

¹⁹ South Carolina Miscellany, Presbyterian College.

²⁰ Cooper, *Statutes*, IV, 248; Joseph Johnson, *Traditions and Reminiscences of the American Revolution in the South* (Charleston, 1851), pp. 27-36. *S. C. G.*, January 25, 1765.

²¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 37-43. Helen Kohn Hennig, *Great South Carolinians* (Chapel Hill, 1940), pp. 85-107. The late Professor R. L. Meriwether thinks that the summation of Gadsden's career shows him to be an "excellent representative of the liberal portion of the South Carolina aristocracy" and that he was no more democratic than to insist upon popular rights and self-government with aristocratic leadership (Allen Johnson and Dumas Malone, *Dictionary of American Biography* [20 vol.; New York, 1931], VII, 82-83); Gibbes, *Documentary History, 1764-1776*, pp. 7-11.

imbibed & propagated from Boston & Rhode Island (from which Towns at this time of the year, vessels very frequently arrived)."²²

Early on the morning of October 19, a gallows, some twenty feet high was erected in the most conspicuous spot in town, the intersection of Broad and Church Streets. Hanging there was an effigy of a stamp collector with a devil at its right hand and a boot with a head stuck upon it on its left. Boldly written on the display were "Liberty and no Stamp Act"; "That all internal duties, imposed . . . without the consent of . . . representatives is grievous, oppressive, and unconstitutional"; "Whoever shall dare attempt to pull down these effigies, had better been born with a stone about his neck, and cast into the sea."²³

Some upholsterers and carpenters had obviously displayed their talents. The exhibit had the desired effect. The General Court was in sessions, usually a time for gatherings, and the show attracted a great concourse of people. The town was now aroused, and the provincial officials dared not land the stamps.²⁴

In the evening the figures were taken down, loaded on a cart, and carried about town in a funeral procession attended by at least two thousand revelers. Solemnly, the parade halted at the house of George Saxby, the fortunately absent stamp officer. The leaders demanded a search. The occupants hesitated, and their windows were broken. The mob wanted to level the place but they were restrained. A search followed, but no papers were discovered. The crowd moved on, stopped at the town green, and burned the dummies. Then, while the muffled tones of St. Michael's bells pealed, the mob mournfully buried a coffin on which was inscribed "American Liberty." Afterward, the houses of other suspects were examined, including many of those of the King's officers. One, having heard of the approach of the mob, prepared for trouble, made ready a quantity of rum punch which, upon their arrival, everyone imbibed, drinking "*Damnation to the Stamp-Act.*" Among those subjected to indignities was the merchant prince Henry

²² P. R., XXX, 281-283.

²³ S. C. G., October 31, 1765.

²⁴ *Ibid.*

Laurens, a longstanding friend of Gadsden until the Cherokee War when Laurens' bitter denunciation of Gadsden and his opinions nearly occasioned a duel. Laurens recognized Gadsden's cohorts in the crowd which searched his house and the breach widened although Gadsden denied responsibility for the mob's affronts.²⁵

The entire week was filled with turbulence. Bills asserting natural rights and containing threats to the Crown's servants were posted all over town. Finally, the stamp agents announced publicly their intention to suspend the execution of their offices "till the determination of the King and parliament of Great Britain should be known, upon a united application . . . from his Majesty's colonies for repeal of an act that had created so much confusion." Order was then restored.²⁶



Jonathan Sarrazin,
J E W E L L E R
HAS JUST IMPORTED, *In the Heart of Oak,*
Captain Gunn, from LONDON:
A LARGE ASSORTMENT OF
JEWELLERY & PLATE

Until the winter of 1765-66, another means was used by the radicals to oppose the act. Merchants and traders of some of the northern coastal cities had pledged themselves to boycott British goods. For instance, in New York more than two hundred merchants gathered at Burns' City Arms, a tavern on Broadway, to organize resistance to the Stamp Act. But some of the most prominent of them would not join the Committee of Enforcement for fear of incurring the "frowns of the ministry." However, the leaders of the "Leather aprons," the Sons of Liberty, came forward to fill the Committee seats. Similarly, the Fire Company of Charleston, composed of artisans, warned that no provisions should

²⁵ Wallace, *Henry Laurens*, pp. 116-119.

²⁶ P. R., XXX, 281-283, 279-280. S. C. G., October 31, 1765. Richard Hutson to Joel Benedict, October 30, 1765, City of Charleston, *Charleston Yearbook*, 1895 (Charleston, 1883-1948), p. 313.

be shipped to Georgia nor any colony using stamp paper. When a ship captain, employed by merchants John Ward and Peter Leger, attempted to export rice to Georgia, he was handed a letter from the Sons of Liberty stating that if the rice was loaded they would destroy the craft. "Reflecting on the Confusion and Anarchy that then prevailed," the two merchants thought it "prudent to submit" to them.²⁷

Not all Carolinians were happy about the resulting cessation of trade. One self-appointed spokesman for the back country, Charles Woodmason, opined that they did not care "who may starve so that they can but eat—who sinks, so they swim,—who labours and are heavy laden, so they can keep their Equipages. Their throats bellow one thing—But their hands would execute ye reverse . . . These are the Sons of Liberty."²⁸

By the winter of 1766, many townsmen became displeased with the anti-British movement. Trade was at a standstill and judicial proceedings had ceased. Unsuccessfully, the radicals tried to force the courts to proceed without stamped documents. They also demanded that the government allow vessels to sail regardless of the act. At first the governor seemed to surrender to public clamor by permitting ships to leave for Florida, the Bermudas, and New Providence. He feared that the Crown's forces in these areas would suffer famine because of the halt in commerce, but later, becoming apprehensive of renewed outbreaks of tumults and violence, he permitted clearance to all ships whose captains had paid a sum equivalent to the charges required by the Stamp Act.²⁹

What had occurred in Charleston was more or less similar to what happened in other coastal towns. Boycott brought havoc for

²⁷ *S. C. G.*, February 25, 1766. *H. J.*, 1765-1768, pp. 477-479, November 17, 1767. About this time the firemen were Bernard Beekman, plumber and blockmaker; Richard Moncrief, carpenter; George Sheed, plumber; Peter Saunders, saddler; Nightingale and Edwards, saddlers; James Verree, carpenter; William Hall, carpenter; Joseph Verree, carpenter; Tunis Tebout, blacksmith; William Johnson, blacksmith (*Cooper, Statutes*, IV, 228, 253, *et passim*); Arthur Meier Schlesinger, *The Colonial Merchants and the American Revolution, 1763-1776* (New York, 1939), pp. 77-82; Thomas Jefferson Wertenbaker, *Father Knickerbocker Rebels: New York City During the Revolution* (New York, 1948), pp. 1, 11-12, 19, 42-43.

²⁸ Quoted in Robert H. Woody, "Christopher Gadsden and the Stamp Act," *Proceedings of the South Carolina Historical Association* (1939), p. 9.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 7-8. W. Roy Smith, *South Carolina as a Royal Province* (New York, 1903), pp. 352-357. P. R., XXX, 277-278, XXXI, 22-25. Drayton, *Memoirs*, I, 89-91.

the British merchant, mechanic, and laborer. While workers rioted in the streets of London, Parliament considered memorials from English businessmen describing appalling economic dislocations; debts were unpaid and manufacturers were unsold. From the first, English businessmen believed that taxation "would injure trade by draining the colonies of the specie with which they bought British manufactures" and create "ill feeling between Englishmen and their customers overseas. . . . But above all they did not wish Parliament to thrust its hand into the pockets of the colonists because their hands were already there, busily engaged in removing whatever small change Americans might happen to accumulate." Parliament repealed the act, but not without a fight. It was vigorously opposed in the House of Lords and only the acceptance of the Declaratory Act secured its approval.³⁰

Amid celebrations in Charleston over the repeal of the Stamp Act, the Declaratory Act went nearly unnoticed. Couched in the same sweeping terms as the Irish Declaratory Act of 1719, it pronounced the American Colonies subordinate to and dependant upon the Crown and Parliament. While Charleston rang with cheers and huzzas, a more sober meeting at the Liberty Tree was taking place. There Gadsden and the mechanics gathered privately, and in the words of George Flagg the painter, "Gadsden harangued them at considerable length, on the folly of relaxing their opposition and vigilance, or of indulging the fallacious hope that Great Britain would relinquish her designs and pretensions. He drew their attention to the preamble of the act, forcibly pressed upon them the folly of rejoicing at a law that still asserted and maintained the absolute dominion of Great Britain over them. Then, reviewing all the chances of succeeding in a struggle to break the fetters whenever again imposed on them," the mechanics joined hands and swore their defence against tyranny," but, like the silversmith Grimke, some must have thought, "Thank God" the province was "now again, the land of liberty. . . ." ³¹

³⁰ John C. Miller, *Origins of the American Revolution*, pp. 150, 158, 221.

³¹ Gibbes, *Documentary History, 1764-1776*, pp. 10-11; Johnson, *Traditions and Reminiscences*, pp. 28-29; Burton, *South Carolina Silversmiths*, p. 77.

4. The Hard Times of the 1760's

With the repeal of the Stamp Act the mechanics and their fellow radicals realized they had successfully opposed British authority. This set a precedent and gave encouragement. Subsequent steps against the Crown and Parliament could be undertaken more easily. The Stamp Act produced a year of crisis and defeat for British policy, yet the ministry continued to press the principles of parliamentary superiority and mercantilism.

The question of currency was significant. Between 1755 and 1760, in order to finance the war, Great Britain allowed South Carolina to print £609,593 in paper money which was to be retired by taxes within five years after the date of issuance. Throughout the 1760's these bills were steadily withdrawn until only £106,500 remained in circulation by 1768.³²

South Carolina's system of taxation usually prevented a dire scarcity of money, but real safety in this respect depended largely upon the amount of government spending. Certificates were issued to provincial creditors which were valid only for the payment of taxes. However, these bills passed as legal tender, anyway, or enabled holders to retain the legal currency for long periods. Unfortunately, there was a comparative reduction in provincial expenditures after 1765.

In the meantime, Parliament greatly impaired the colonial financial structure by passing "an act to prevent the issue of paper bills of credit in any of the colonies and to prohibit the legal tender of such bills, as were then subsisting, from being prolonged beyond the periods for calling in and sinking them." The law became operative in September, 1764.³³

The decrease in a circulating medium was felt by the debtors of the Province, the mechanics and planters. Planters particularly "chafed under the operation of the law." All their crops were insufficient to pay their debts, and further buying from the mechanics or merchants at home or abroad through their factors was

³² Cooper, *Statutes*, IV, 18-19, 45, 113, 312-314, 238, 268, 304, 312; Sellers, *Charleston Business on the Eve of the American Revolution*, p. 189.

³³ S. C. G., October 22, 1764.

out of the question. Bills which were contracted in the earlier part of the decade were harder to pay after 1765 because of the scarcity of money.

The mechanics were faced with the same situation as the planters. It became more difficult for them to pay wages and expansion became impossible. Grudgingly the mechanics were compelled to barter, to accept produce in exchange for their goods and services. Planters and mechanics were harassed by the merchants who pressed fiercely for the payment of the dues. Court dockets were crowded with such cases.³⁴

The shortage of currency meant inevitable failure for many of the most prominent artisans, as indicated by a few examples taken from the liberty boys, those who had met with Gadsden in 1766 to hear his harangue against the Declaratory Act. Tunis Tebout, one of the men at the Liberty Tree, was constantly in debt in the 1760's, especially between 1766 and 1770, owing about £4,479 currency to various merchants. Evidently because of this he curtailed his operations. His partnership with William Johnson was terminated, and in 1769 he sold his handicraft slaves, his coastal schooner, and his "boat negroes." The plight of Benjamin Hawes was even worse. He owed more than £2,260 and by 1770 was insolvent. About the same time the Fellowship Society offered him financial aid. Hawes' partners in the coastal trade, George Flagg and Nathaniel Lebby, suffered along with him. Their ship, *The Three Brothers*, was sold in the late 1760's. Thus hard times touched the most important members of the mechanics' group, their political leaders.³⁵

Furthermore, there were indications of a general decline in the trade of other mechanics. Although commerce reopened with England in 1766, it was not at the high level of the early 1760's. Because of continual political difficulties northward, the tanners

³⁴ Records of the Court of Common Pleas, 1767. Miscellaneous Court Records, 1770-1771, Book DD, MS, typewritten copies, South Caroliniana Library. C. J., March 25, 1766; Sellers, *Charleston Business on the Eve of the American Revolution*, pp. 203-204.

³⁵ Miscellaneous Court Records, 1770-1771, 98, 99, 100, 110, 264, 338, 374, 392-393; Records of Court of Common Pleas, 1767, 135, 178, 211, 212, 272-274, 393-396; S. C. G., May 2, 1768, October 5, 1769; C. J., October 13, 1767, April 4, 1775, May 30, 1769; G. G., July 18, 1770; Minute Book of the Fellowship Society, 1769-1779.

who carried on an intercoastal trade with the New England communities saw their market diminishing. Between 1760 and 1764, they shipped out 20,120 sides of leather, but between 1767 and 1770 they exported only 10,827. Their most productive year was 1764 when they sold 7,116 sides and their worst was 1768 with the sale of 2,629. The chandlers also had seen better days in the early period but in 1768, they experienced a drop in trade like that of the coopers who in the same years exported twenty-four per cent fewer staves than in 1767. The shipwrights who had their best times in 1764 and 1766, completing 1,341 tons of shipping, sent less than half of their total down the ways in the next two years.³⁶

Wage-earning master artisans were also in financial straits. One tradesman lamented that it was "past a doubt, that an industrious Man, who does not earn more than *Thirty or Forty Shillings in the Day* (and few do that) cannot possibly pay House-Rent, Cloath and feed his family, and pay Five Pounds out of his poor Pittance to purchase a Cord of Firewood. . . ."³⁷

If the master artisan complained about his wages, how fared the journeyman who did not operate his own business? Few journeymen received even 30 shillings, and in no instance is it recorded that they earned as much as 40 shillings per day. Ordinary laborers received between 7 and 8 shillings daily. That the laboring element lived a precarious economic life was evidenced by their preference for weekly instead of monthly payment of wages. At least one refusal to work for the provincial government occurred in 1765 because the General Assembly took so long to pay workers.³⁸

High prices and scarcities of provisions added to the hardships of laborers. One petition to the assembly declared that the poor people of the parishes found it "very difficult to live due to the Scarcity of Provisions as well as money." The weighted all-commodity index of wholesale prices in Charleston verifies the statement. In general, prices of food were higher in the later part than in the earlier part of the decade. Furthermore, the annual average

³⁶ Gayle, "The Nature and Volume of Exports from Charleston, 1724-1774," pp. 31-33; Ship Registers, 1730-1774. Clark, *History of Manufacturers*, I, 115.

³⁷ These artisans were probably carpenters, bricklayers, painters, carvers, gilders (*S. C. G.*, February 2, 1765).

³⁸ Appendix H. J., 1765, p. 37, February 14, 1765.

price of the staple food, rice, was high. In the years between 1761 and 1766, the price index of rice was 5.88; while between 1766 and 1769, it was 8.525.³⁹

Under these conditions, it is not surprising that the Townshend Revenue Act of June 29, 1767, was badly received by the artisans. The merchants, who were not greatly disturbed by the tax, passed it along to their customers in the form of higher prices. It therefore bore directly on such mechanics as painters George Flagg and Benjamin Hawes since it provided for a tax on painters' colors and white lead. It also fell on cabinetmakers, builders, and glaziers like John Prue, Daniel Cannon, and Edward Weyman, for there was a duty on glass. Stationers, bookbinders, and printers were taxed because there was a levy on a type of paper called Atlas fine, and ultimately the act threatened both planters and artisans since it would drain the Province further of specie.

The radicals once more raised the political question. provincials would be stripped of their rights as Englishmen, for the Townshend Act permitted officers of the Crown to search without warrant the places of those under suspicion of housing untaxed or smuggled goods. Another tax without consent was as welcome as the pox.

A writer in the gazette summed up the situation, "in one View." "At a time," he said, when "your Credit is as good as the Bank of England,—ye are restrained from making *Paper Money* a lawful tender. —By other Resolutions, ye are prevented from the usual supplies of *Gold* and *Silver*, which in some Measure, would have provided against that hardship—." By Duties, "*Laid* on the most *necessary* Articles you *import*," money is extorted "from your *Pockets*, for the Maintenance of a set of *Harpies*"; British customs officers, "let loose among ye, to Destroy your Trade, . . . harass ye to Death," and ransack homes. He added, heatedly, that paying duties in silver would "carry every solitary straggling Piece

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 1765-1768, pp. 105, 141, 144-145, June 5, 7, 1766. Cooper, *Statutes*, IV, 236-238. Due to the scarcity of provisions, in June, 1766, the legislature forbade the exportation of rice and provided a public store to sell it. The price remained high, nevertheless. (Arthur Harrison Cole, *Wholesale Commodity Prices in the United States, 1700-1861* (Cambridge, 1938), pp. 54, 154-156).

of that Metal over the Atlantic, like Ghosts over the Stygian Lake, never to return . . ."⁴⁰

5. *Sign or Die*

"We are always willing and ready to furnish the public with all the Intelligence that comes to our Hands, as well as to convince the World, that we have as great an Attachment to the glorious cause of Liberty and our Country, as any other Publishers or Person Whatever," boasted printer Charles Crouch in October, 1768, when he printed an "extraordinary" issue of the *Country Journal* containing the resolves of the tradesmen of New York and the news from Boston deprecating the Townshend Act. It was not until then, however, that most of Charleston stirred in protest against the Townshend duties.⁴¹

More immediate anxieties pressed the people in the meantime. While they doubtless watched the rest of the country, they worried more about internal problems. Throughout 1767 and for much of 1768, the Charleston newspapers were filled with notices of the Regulator disturbances in the back country. Public attention seemed to be diverted.

But the chief reason for comparative quiet in Charleston, when the rest of the colonies were in turmoil over the Townshend Act, were the Charleston merchants. During the week including September 16, 1768, circular letters from the traders of Boston calling for concerted opposition to the ministry were passed among them. The letters were treated with "silent neglect." Remembering the tumultuous days of the Stamp Act and especially the boycott, Charleston's merchants were not eager to make another colony's misfortunes their own.

However, "British Carolinian" reflected the feeling of the radicals of the city and urged resistance. The "Apprehension from the Regulators is over," he said, "and we are generally convinced that

⁴⁰ *S. C. G.*, September 7, 1769. There were exceptions to the general position of the merchants, however. Some, like Henry Laurens, began to awaken at this juncture. They were already vexed by the minute regulations of the Navigation Acts, now more strictly enforced, and the British placement holding office under them. The Townshend Acts threatened to make the situation worse (Wallace, *Henry Laurens*, pp. 137-158).

⁴¹ *C. J.*, October 13, 1768.

our fears were groundless. Happy people should we be, if every man might pursue his proper Occupation; but no sooner are we at rest at home than we are alarmed from Abroad, and the most imminent danger threatens. We are no longer Strangers to the Measures Great Britain is determined to use in treating with her loyal colonies in America." ⁴²

With good reason Lieutenant Governor Bull warned his superiors in England that there were "many here who entertain favorable sentiments of . . . the political principles now prevailing in Boston, which kindles a kind of enthusiasm very apt to predominate in popular assemblies and whose loud cries silence the weaker voices of moderation." ⁴³ Shortly before his writing the mechanics had staged their political rally in favor of candidates who supported the "glorious ninety-two anti-rescinders" of Massachusetts. They paraded through town praising the Bay Colony for its opposition to British authority, and they added to their laudations the name of John Wilkes, an English editor who was imprisoned by Parliament for having printed some uncomplimentary remarks about the members of that house and the Crown. ⁴⁴

In March, 1769, the artisans once again held a public meeting under the Liberty Tree. The occasion was a celebration of the repeal of the Stamp Act. In general, "It was observed," Timothy reported, "that spirits were dampened by the late revenue act" and that among the toasts drunk to Massachusetts and the Pennsylvania Farmer was "Perseverance and Success to AMERICAN MANUFACTURES." ⁴⁵

Apparently, little could be accomplished without the support of the most influential element of the population, the planters, but that the two parties would join together was only a matter of time.

⁴² *Ibid.*, October 11, 1768; *G. G.*, September 16, 23, 1768.

⁴³ P. R., XXXII, 56-57.

⁴⁴ *S. C. G.*, October 1, 1768. A good explanation of the anti-rescinder issue is in Edward McCrady, *History of South Carolina under the Royal Government: 1719-1776* (New York, 1899), pp. 596-604. For John Wilkes' contributions to American and English political liberty see Zechariah Chafee, *Free Speech in the United States* (Cambridge, 1941), pp. 242-243.

The mechanics' rally of October 1 which McCrady (*loc. cit.*, p. 604) says "constituted what would now be called a caucus or nominating convention." See above.

⁴⁵ *S. C. G.*, March 23, 1769.

While the merchants were comparatively unmoved, the mechanics and the planters were traveling the same route. Early in June the *South Carolina Gazette* noted another meeting of the mechanics "to see how far they could follow the laudable example of their brother tradesmen in New York" who had espoused non-importation. About the same time, "A Planter from the PeeDee" attacked the Charleston merchants for their disregard of the circular letter from the merchants of Boston. After calling the Charleston traders "mere birds of Passage, come here to make a fortune" and stating that the planters were the "greatest sufferers" of all from the "late unconstitutional acts" of Parliament, he set forth a plan of American economy designed to punish England. By the 15th of June, several "Societies of Gentlemen" in the town would "purchase no kind of British Goods" that could be manufactured in America and these Gentlemen intended "to cloath themselves in homespun" as soon as it was available.⁴⁶

The alliance was probably effected by June 22. At that time, Gadsden addressed the "Planters, Mechanics, and Freeholders of the Province of South Carolina," exhorting them to resist the British Act. He appended to his address a plan of non-importation of British goods which was suitable to the two groups. A leading planter, John Mackenzie, was also counted among the radicals about this time. On June 28, a proposal calling for the encouragement to manufacturers, particularly those of South Carolina, and for the importation of Negro cloth and mechanics' tools, but non-importation of other articles was brought forward for subscription. Townsmen were asked to subscribe to it within thirty days and implored not to buy a "rod" for their "own breech" by paying the Townshend duties.⁴⁷

The position of the merchants was now endangered. Non-importation would injure them more than the duties imposed by Parliament. Unlike the merchants of the northern provinces, they carried on little, if any, clandestine trade, and in general, mercantilism helped more than hurt them. The Charleston merchants were

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, June 1, 8, 15, 1769.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, June 22. William Henry Drayton, *Letters of Freeman* (London, 1771), pp. 1-5. Negro cloth meaning osnaburgh.

greatly outnumbered, however, and they faced a keen radical leadership. Governor Bull wrote to England and described the "movers of the grand machine": "Mr. Thomas Lynch who, tho' a man of sense is very obstinate in urging to extremity . . . any opinion he has once adopted," Mr. Christopher Gadsden, "a violent enthusiast in the cause . . . Views every object of British moderation and measures with a suspicious and jaundiced eye, and maintains with great vehemence the most extravagant claims of American exemptions," and "Mr. John Mackenzie, whose education at Cambridge ought to have inspired him with more dutiful sentiments of the Mother Country." There were numerous subordinates, Bull claimed, but these were "the most determined leaders" and "tribunes of the people." "At public meetings, whether in Taverns or under the Liberty Tree, they direct the motions as they previously settle the matter."⁴⁸

On the other hand the merchants were not unwary. To remain aloof from the proceedings, now going completely against them, was to invite more extreme measures. They convened at Dillon's Tavern and there determined upon joining the movement but bringing about moderation by isolating the most radical element, the mechanics. On July 7 they presented a plan designed to capture the planters but exclude the mechanics.⁴⁹

The mechanics were furious. A heated contest then took place between them and the merchants to gain support for their respective agreement of non-importation. "A Mechanic" pointed out the difference in the two plans and implored the inhabitants to adhere to the first, attributed to the mechanics and the planters. He wrote: "How can it be expected, that any Planter, Mechanic, or other inhabitant, distinct" from the merchants, "will subscribe to their Resolutions, now circulating for that purpose, when THEY do not contain a single syllable ENCOURAGING AMERICAN MANUFACTURERS." "Were any besides Merchants invited to their meeting . . . as at ours . . .?" Had a public gathering occurred, "so unpardonable an omission" would not have happened.⁵⁰

⁴⁸ McCrady, *S. C. Under the Royal Government*, pp. 411-412. P. R., XXXII, 416.

⁴⁹ *S. C. G.*, July 6, 13, 1769.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, July 13, 1769.

The disagreement over the kind of resolutions continued throughout July, but the mechanics made their triumph inevitable by adding two popular amendments to theirs: one prohibiting the importation of Negroes from Great Britain after January 1, 1770, and another stating that no British importations should be bought from transient traders.⁵¹

The additions made inroads on the merchants' resolutions. The prohibition on the importation of slaves pleased the planters and farmers who felt that the slave trade had drained them of specie. Mechanics who competed with slave labor were joyful over any halt in the commerce of slavery; and the restrictions on transients' trading probably won the small merchants, whose number included many artisans who augmented their income by retailing goods and groceries. These latter groups were irritated continuously by vendors from beyond the Province.⁵²

Another factor which cannot be overlooked and which favored the success of the mechanic-planter form was the influence of Christopher Gadsden. A great merchant himself, which cast him in the role of peacemaker, he worked persistently for unanimity of resistance to Great Britain.

Finally, after it was reported that some merchants were offering both kinds of boycotts to the public and that many others had pledged support to those of the mechanics and planters, the remaining irreconcilables requested a meeting with the radicals. Shortly afterwards, this phase of the controversy ended. Before a large gathering of every class Gadsden read a plan twice, first for information, and second, point by point, for approval by the assemblage. A set of resolves was found acceptable to all parties. What emerged from the private and public meetings was nevertheless chiefly the plan of non-importation of the planters and the mechanics.

On the same day, the artisans won another signal victory in the appointment of a committee to enforce the boycott. It contained representatives, on an equal standing, of the three interested par-

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, July 6, 1769.

⁵² C. J., February 7, 1769; S. C. G., June 1, 1769. Sellers, *Charleston Business on the Eve of the American Revolution*, p. 207.

ties: the planters, the merchants, and the mechanics, each having thirteen seats. It is of interest to note that Thomas Young, John Matthews, Joseph Dill, John Fullerton, William Trusler, John Prue, Theodore Trezvant, Bernard Beekman, Cato Ash, Simon Berwick, Joseph Verree, Daniel Cannon, and Tunis Tebout were on the mechanics' committee, and that their presence marks the beginning of representation for them. The committee, being an extra-legal body, the mechanics' persistent agitation was to find them on every such organ of revolution to the convening of the Provincial Congress in 1775.⁵³

The Committee for enforcing the non-importation of British goods was granted broad powers by the General Meeting of the Inhabitants, which apparently could be attended by anyone choosing to participate in its actions. For example, at one of these gatherings in September, "it was determined, That the General Resolutions . . . should be *most strictly* adhered to and left to the General Committee to take every necessary and justifiable Step for preventing the least Deviation therefrom." As long as it possessed the approbation of the public and unity of purpose with the other colonies, the Committee was undeniably powerful.⁵⁴

The methods by which it commanded obedience were harsh. "Sign or Die" became their motto, which non-signers thought should be instead "Sign or Be Ruined." Sometimes recalcitrant persons were threatened with violence, but such measures were never used. Rather, non-subscribers were boycotted, contemptuously advertised as being inimical to American rights, and supposedly ostracized. If goods were imported, they were stored or re-shipped under the Committee's direction. Transients were watched with suspicion and treated arbitrarily. In one instance the committee caught a factor of a New York shipmaster selling a parcel of

⁵³ *S. C. G.*, July 13, July 27, 1769. These men, who were members of the Fellowship Society, met under the Liberty Tree in 1766, or were members of the Fire Company at the time of the Stamp Act: Cato Ash, carpenter; John Fullerton, carpenter; Joseph Dill, carpenter; Simon Berwick, shoemaker; John Matthews, shoemaker; Theodore Trezvant, tailor; Thomas Young, bricklayer; William Trusler, butcher, who was shot by the Americans in 1781 in an attempt to escape capture (*Proceedings of the Board of Police*, MS, British Public Records Office, London, England, Microfilm, S. C. Arch.). By 1781 Trusler had turned loyalist (*S. C. H. G. M.*, XXXIX [January, 1918], 44-45).

⁵⁴ *S. C. G.*, September 7, 1769.

onions. He was conducted before the General Committee and made "to promise to do so no more and to deliver up to the poor all that remained" unsold. On another occasion Philip Tidyman, the jeweler, received goods from England unfortunately consigned to him but not ordered by him. When news of their arrival reached the Committee, Tidyman became fearful of facing them, fled to the ship carrying the goods, and set sail for England. Later, in the press, he abjectly apologized for his behavior. It must have been at this juncture that Alexander Gillon, the later leader of mechanic causes, learned a hard lesson in politics, for he too ran afoul of the Committee and was treated accordingly.⁵⁵

Admittedly, while non-importation was in effect, smuggling took place in the town, but on the whole the Committee operated with some success. At the end of July, 1769, they had obtained 142 signatures. Peter Timothy reported that by December of that year, only thirty irreconcilables remained. Another witness to these happenings claimed that few ships were in the harbor in December, a time when the port was usually bustling. Moreover, figures show a marked decline in the overseas trade for the period of the resistance to the Townshend Act.⁵⁶

The mechanics were delighted. Non-importation provided welcome relief from the influx of British manufactures, and "Encouragement to American Manufacturers" became a popular slogan. Timothy related that plans were afoot to finance manufacturing at home.

About this time, a society was organized which styled itself the "Lovers and Encouragers of American Manufacturers." A scheme to establish a paper mill was undertaken, while Charleston merchants were selling articles of Carolina made more than ever

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, November 16, 23, 30, December 7, 1769; February 1, 15, September 14, 27, October 4, 11, 18, 25, November 1, 8, 1770. P. R., XXXII, 103, 200-201.

⁵⁶ S. C. G., August 1, 10, December 14, 1769; October 11, 1770. David MacPherson, *Annals of Commerce* (4 vol.; Edinburgh, 1805), III, 486, 494, 508, 518-519. *Freeman*, p. 237. There is, however, a moderating factor. As in the other colonies, the merchants seemed to have a surplus of materials on hand. There is no great let-up in their advertising during this time. By October 11, 1770, their stores were empty. It was not long afterward that the resolutions were discarded. Yet other factors enter into this too; there was no longer a united colonial resistance to the acts by December 1770, for example.

before. One of them announced that he had homespun for sale, and another offered bargains in home-woven colored stockings. To aid prospective household weavers, wheelwright Joshua Eden, offered to sell spinning wheels, the products of his craftsmanship. Another mechanic, saddler William Edwards, not only offered saddles for sale "as cheap as imported," but also furniture, chairs, and chaises wrought in Carolina, while Richard Burkloe sold "Liberty umbrellas." Another good sign was that the employment of journeymen seemed to rise, for advertisements soliciting this kind of help were not infrequent. There can be little doubt that the mechanics were having their inning and would not let their advantage escape easily.⁵⁷

Non-importation provoked bitter and heated controversy. William Henry Drayton and William Wragg took up their pens in defense of those favoring importation. John Mackenzie, Christopher Gadsden, and his mechanics argued on the other side.

Wragg and Drayton hammered at the Association. It was unfounded in British constitutional practices. The General Committee had usurped the powers of the assembly, and non-importation injured the economy of the province. McKenzie answered tersely claiming the Associators protected the economy of the province from British incursions. If the people chose not to buy British goods, they had that right; such actions had no bearing on the constitution whatever. Mackenzie had no defense for the fact of extra legal enforcement of non-importation.⁵⁸

Wragg aimed shafts at Gadsden for advocating independence. Gadsden denied the charge, not however categorically: "To be independent of Great Britain, would be the greatest misfortune that could befall" the colonies, "excepting that of losing their rights and liberties: that indeed is, and must be confessedly, a greater" misfortune. He reminded: the opposition that "the oppressive measures pursued, tend rather to bring on than to prevent that period."⁵⁹

⁵⁷ *S. C. G.*, March 7, July 6, August 10, September 28, November 30, December 14, 1769; January 4, 11, 18, June 7, August 16, 1770 and other newspapers of the period.

⁵⁸ *Freeman, passim.*

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 138-139.

Drayton ridiculed the mechanics calling them the "*profanus vulgus.*" "The industrious mechanic, [is] a useful and essential part of society . . ." A society cannot subsist without them. But, friends! every man to his trade: a carpenter would find himself somewhat at a loss in handling a smith's tools, and he would find himself but in an awkward situation on a cobbler's bench. When a man acts in his own sphere, he is useful in the community, but when he steps out of it, and sets up for a statesmen! [*sic*] believe me he is in a fair way to expose himself to ridicule, and his family to distress, by neglecting his private business . . ." Men of liberal education, he insisted to Mackenzie and Gadsden, should neither mingle nor consult with those "who were never in a way to study, or to advise upon any points, but rules how to cut up a beast in a market to best advantage, to cobble an old shoe in the neatest manner, or to build a necessary house. Nature never intended that such men should be profound politicians, or able statesmen. . . ." ⁶⁰

The mechanics burned and taunted the aristocratic Drayton for possessing an estate which was "ready provided to his hand, either by his own or his wife's parents." Nothing had been earned with his labor. The numerous classical quotations which encumbered Drayton's essays recommended him to the insane asylum.⁶¹

During the controversy, Gadsden offered what was perhaps the best defense of all the lesser folk by explaining their position. He told non-subscribers that:⁶²

There are not wanting, wealthy men amongst the farmers and mechanics; yet, in common their circumstances are but low; and as oppression, when at its height, generally falls heaviest upon men, who have little beforehand, but depend, almost altogether upon their daily labour and industry, for the maintenance of themselves and families; it is no wonder, that throughout America, we find these men extremely anxious and attentive to the cause of liberty.—While a British American subject, has a full and peaceable enjoyment of all the constitutional rights he is entitled unto, not an *honest*

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 60, 61, 70, 80, 81, 103-104.

⁶¹ *S. C. G.*, October 5, 1769.

⁶² *Ibid.*, November 9, 1769.

industrious man, amongst the poorest of them (unless some very uncommon instances indeed) but must find himself, in a very comfortable situation, especially when he compares his condition, with that of the poor of other nations. The distinctions in that case, between the farmer and the rich planter, the mechanics and the rich merchant, being abundantly *more* here, in imagination, than reality; there not being the least danger of starving, amongst us. Every man, therefore, who has the *constitutional* command of what is his own, be it more or less, and confines his wants thereto, may, without repining, follow his daily employment, with the greatest cheerfulness, and make himself very easy and contented, even supposing, he requires his living at the sweat of his brow: And, in fact, more of these people . . . appear to do so, than of those who are owners of large possessions. But, when oppression stalks abroad, then the case is widely different: For in arbitrary governments, tyranny generally descends, as it were, from rank to rank, through the people, til' almost the whole weight of it, at last, falls upon the honest laborious farmer, mechanic, and day labourer. When this happens, it must make them poor, almost *irremediably* poor indeed! And the very apprehension thereof, can not but cause extreme uneasiness. This, therefore, naturally accounts for these people, in particular, being united and steady, everywhere, to prevent, if possible, being reduced to so dismal a situation: Which, should it be unhappily the case, they can not but know, they must then see it out, and feel it out too, be it what may.

However much the parties debated, the end of the struggle arrived. Largely owing to the cessation of trade, Parliament repealed the Townshend Act, but kept a tax on tea, which annoyed the colonists, not because the levy was extortionate, but because it was a reminder of the claim of Parliament to tax the colonies. For this reason and for others of a more economic nature, the radicals desired to maintain resistance to Britain as long as any semblance of taxation was in effect. They appeared to hold sway for a brief period, but one by one, the other colonies deserted the cause. New

York broke its resolutions, and then Virginia, Maryland, North Carolina, and the town of Marblehead followed. As a result, the sentiments of the town and country began to turn against the radicals. Perceiving this, Timothy cried in his *Gazette*—“Oh New York, New York.”⁶³

Finally, in the face of altered opinions, a meeting of the inhabitants was called in December, 1770. At the gathering, which Bull described as numerous, there was a long silence, “each party acting on the reserve to receive the first attack.” At last, “one of no note stept forth and moved that no further regard shou’d be had to the Resolutions; upon which a motion was made to consider whether there should be any alteration or no. The general voice was yea.” Then “Mr. Lynch who came fifty miles to Town on purpose exerted all his eloquence and . . . Rhetorical Tears for the expiring liberties of his dear country, which the merchants would sell like any other merchandize. He was seconded by his two brethren [Gadsden and Mackenzie] “who were for continuing the Association and proposed importing goods from Holland; but the struggle tho’ strong proved ineffectual.”

The radicals wrested a few empty concessions from their triumphant opponents. Probably at the artisans insistence, a committee was appointed to encourage American manufactures. A new declaration was secured against the importation of tea and luxury items, and to try the constitutional issue, tea, but such were conditions that the latter could not be enforced without violence. The artisans and their radical friends were once again in the minority. Certainly, pangs of disappointment were much in evidence, perhaps new schemes too, for the justifiably suspicious Governor apprehended “some new plan of Association” by these “Busy Spirits.”⁶⁴

⁶³ *Ibid.*, August 23, November 29, December 6, 13, 1770. P. R., XXXII, 415-417, 434-435.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

III

THE EARLY YEARS OF REVOLUTION

Besides the bitterness of defeat in 1770, hardship amidst prosperity appears to have been the lot of the mechanics on the eve of the Revolution. The Tea Act, however, revived the fires of resistance, which had been kept smouldering by the mechanics and fellow progressives. The planters and some disappointed merchants joined with them to precipitate revolt. But the unsettled era between 1776 and 1780 burdened the artisans with unexpected problems of scarcity, inflation, speculation. Consequently, political embroilments and altered positions characterize the time.

1. Eve of the Revolution

With the repeal of the Townshend Act, Charleston commerce revived. In fact, during 1771-1773, the merchants and the planters considered that business was booming. The value of exports of Carolina products rose from £420,311:14:8 sterling in 1771 to £456,513:8:4 sterling in 1773. Good prices were received for all commodities, especially rice.¹

That the artisans were experiencing good years after 1770 is doubtful, however. The promise, extracted from the inhabitants in December, 1770, to encourage manufactures, was unfulfilled. No grants to mechanical employments are in evidence in the provincial records nor are such aids even discussed in the assembly. Only those manufactures which fitted the mercantilist economy received bounties. Consequently, the handiworks of English and

¹ MacPherson, *Annals of Commerce*, III, 508, 518, 533, 550, 564; Cole, *Wholesale Commodity Prices in the United States 1700-1861*, pp. 54, 155-156.

Scotch craftsmen were unloaded, as usual, on the piers of Charleston before the eyes of Charleston artisans. From December 1770 until December 1771, the value of imports into Carolina from England was nearly four times as great as that of the previous year. The next year, their value was £40,000 sterling higher than that of 1771.²

Statistics of the trades of the shipbuilder, the cooper, and the tanner indicate economic uncertainty during these years. Business went well with the shipwrights in 1771 when they constructed 877 tons of ocean-going vessels. In the next three years, a discouraging decline set in. They built but 223 tons in 1772; 361 in 1773; and 345 in 1774. The leatherdressers fared well in 1770 and poorly in 1771, but unlike the shipwrights, they regained their trade during the next two years. The coopers had a boom and a recession on the other hand; in 1771 they shipped off 101,228 staves; in 1772, 158,614; and in 1773 only 79,875.³

At this time, the mechanics of Charleston also felt uneasy about the growth of the slave trade. It threatened many of them with severe competition. Non-importation had checked this traffic, but between 1771 and 1774 importations reached unprecedented heights. During May, 1773, for instance, twelve shiploads of slaves were offered for sale, numbering about 1,900 slaves. Reliable estimates place the amount of imported Negroes at 4,865 for 1772, and the following year at 8,000, large numbers in view of the fact that the annual average of such importations between 1756 and 1765 had been approximately 1,894 per year. The slave population of South Carolina leaped from 80,000 to 110,000 between 1769 and 1773. Radical minded Peter Timothy, who became one of the leaders of the artisan party, was a small slave

² H. J., 1700-1775; Journals of the Council, MS, S. C. Arch.; MacPherson, *Annals of Commerce*, III, 508, 518, 533, 550, 564. See also Charleston newspapers for 1770-1773 in which the number of advertisements by merchants selling British manufactures had greatly increased above the 1760's. Bounties on naval stuffs and coopers' stores were continued.

³ Ship Registers, 1765-1780; Gayle, "The Nature and Volume of Exports from Charleston, 1724-1774," pp. 31-33. The coopering of other products shows the same trend with the exception of rice, which, it should be added, might have kept the coopers so busy that they had time for little else. The decline in tanning was heavy in 1774. They exported 1,507 sides of leather in 1771; 4,133 sides in 1772; 4,183 sides in 1773; and only 940 sides in 1774.

owner himself. He carefully gathered and published his statistics and with reason regarded the wisdom of heavy slave importations skeptically.⁴

The economy of the artisans was also endangered by political difficulties between the Commons House of Assembly and the conservative Council and royal Governor. The arguments centered mainly about the claim of the lower house to approve money bills on its sole authority. As a result of this disagreement, no tax bills were passed during this period, and public creditors were left empty handed. The mechanics, recipients of such expenditures, were therefore grumbling against the British-minded Council and exhorting fellow townsmen to vote for their candidates, described by "Craftsman" in the *Gazette* as "Men, whose All Center in this Colony, and who can have no Object in View but the Good of their Fellow Citizens—Men, who will serve you *freely* and *Heartily*, thinking as you do of the SOUTH CAROLINA GOOD OLD CAUSE OF LIBERTY."⁵

2. *The Tea Act*

The passage of the Tea Act by Parliament was a monumental error. It reemphasized the principle of the parliamentary right to tax the colonies. It came at a time of political embroilment between the Commons House and the Council which had kept the radicals stirring. More important for the moment, it threatened monopoly to Charleston businessmen, large and small. By enabling the East India Company to sell to a favored few agents in each colony, the

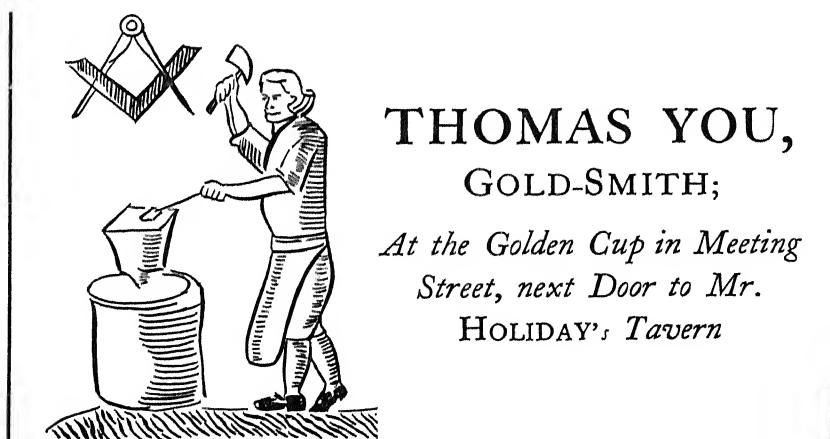
⁴ Elizabeth Donnan, *Documents Illustrative of the Slave Trade* (4 vol.; Washington, 1930-1935), IV, 463; Sellers, *Charleston Business on the Eve of the American Revolution*, pp. 134-135; McCrady, *South Carolina under the Royal Government*, p. 807; Ulrich Bonnell Phillips, "The Slave Labor Problem in Charleston District," *Political Science Quarterly*, XXII (September, 1907), 416-439. As a result the planters were once again drained of specie (Donnan, "Slave Trade into South Carolina before the Revolution," *American Historical Review*, XXXIII [July, 1928], 827-828). Within a few years non-slaveholding artisans again complained bitterly about the use of slave labor; they were mostly coopers and carpenters.

⁵ "A Craftsman," *S. C. G.*, April 4, 1774. The cause for the lack of appropriations was the Wilkes Fund Dispute.

The author estimates that between 1760 and 1766 the artisans received the following amounts which, of course, ceased until 1774, for their work for the province: 1760: £3,166.08.01; 1761: £2,531.02.09; 1762: £5,107.06.01; 1764: £6,193.14.00; 1765: £3,754.09.07; 1766: £1,127.02.08 (Cooper, *Statutes*, IV, 118-127, 137-143, 199-206, 224-228, 248-254; Acts of 1761, 1762, MS, S. C. Arch.).

act frightened many a Charleston merchant. Even Lieutenant Governor Bull lamented the mistake and wished the provision was in no way part of the act. Bull saw the former minority of mechanics and their friends grow to a noisier majority in the town. Conservative merchants who had gladly "broken through" the non-importation agreements of two years previous drifted over to the opposition. The formerly prosperous and contented now joined the discontented.⁶

The radicals were therefore given new grist for their mills. Everywhere, they took heart at new support of their activity. In Massachusetts, Committees of Correspondence had been organized to communicate with the towns of the province as early as 1772. Virginia carried the idea further by setting up a standing Committee of Correspondence to impart and receive news of British and American moves in the controversy.



In Charleston, the mechanics in their John Wilkes Club continually busied themselves celebrating popular causes and very probably disseminating their propaganda containing a program which was essentially the same as that of their brother radicals in the other provinces.⁷

⁶ P. R., XXXIII, 350-354, XXXIV, 6. John Richard Alden, *The South in the Revolution, 1763-1789* (Baton Rouge, La., 1957), pp. 164-168.

⁷ S. C. G., December 21, 1772. Joshua Lockwood, watchmaker, Mark Morris, painter, and Joseph Verree, carpenter, were officers of the club.

Upon the arrival of Captain Curling's ship, *Planters Adventure*, carrying two hundred fifty-seven chests of tea, the radicals distributed handbills calling a meeting of the inhabitants in the Exchange. The meeting, attended primarily by extremists, drew up plans to prevent landing the tea. Later consulting privately, the planters determined not to import tea, but said nothing about permitting its landing. The merchants, conferring alone, decided to reject non-importation and accept the tea. On December 20 the three parties convened. The planters and mechanics finally agreed that tea should not be imported and that the cargo then in the harbor should not be landed. At this point Bull thought that a little forcefulness on the merchants' part might have saved the day for the Crown, but the traders hesitated to disagree with the decision of the majority, and the opinions of the radical and planter parties easily prevailed.⁸

The decision came too late. Upon receiving reports of threats to Captain Curling, Bull took action. By this time the vessel had been in the harbor for twenty days, and the collector was empowered to seize the cargo and store it for non-payment of customs. Bull ordered the Captain to perform his duty and provided him with the protection of the sheriff and his men. Accordingly, the collector unloaded the tea without opposition and placed it in the Exchange. There was no tea party in Charleston on this occasion.⁹

Regarding Bull's victory as only a temporary defeat, the radicals persisted in calling public meetings. On January 23, 1774, the people set up an Executive Committee, like that of 1769, which was to enforce non-importation of tea. Violence was not only threatened on this occasion but employed. In July another cargo of tea arrived. The captain promised that he would not land it but took it ashore, anyhow, and stored it in the Exchange. Enraged by this, a hundred men went in quest of the captain "with great threats." As the mob boarded his vessel from one side, he went off the other and took refuge on another ship. The next morning,

⁸ *Ibid.*, December 6, 13, 20, 27, 1773. P. R., XXXIII, 350-354, XXXIV, 6. Sellers, *Charleston Business on the Eve of the American Revolution*, pp. 223-224. See also Schlesinger, *Colonial Merchants*, pp. 294-298.

⁹ *Ibid.*

the captain's vessel was removed to the outer parts of the harbor so that it would not be burned. Later, more tea arrived "in sight of the people," and the merchants for whom it was intended were forced to dump it in the river, an "oblation to Neptune."¹⁰

The Tea Parties had far-reaching results. Lieutenant Governor Bull was informed from England that the violences attendant upon the landing of the tea in some of the port towns "are circumstances of a very serious nature, and it is the King's firm resolution upon the unanimous advice of his confidential servants, to pursue such measures as shall be effectual for securing the Dependence of the Colonies upon this Kingdom."¹¹

Aiming at the people of Massachusetts, who were considered the real fomenters of trouble, Parliament passed the Coercive Acts. The port of Boston was closed, the government of Massachusetts was placed more strictly under royal control, and the provincial administration of justice was reorganized.

News of the British policy against Boston stimulated activity in Charleston. The radicals had a new plan of "Oeconomy" containing resolves for commercial non-intercourse with Britain. They were in hopes of putting the idea into effect immediately.¹²

Caution became a by-word, however, in bringing forward any new proposal against England. It would injure the trade of the entire Province, and many inhabitants were unwilling to sacrifice themselves in the face of the faithlessness of northern colonies in 1770 when they scrapped their Associations. In June, 1774, therefore, a General Meeting was held in Charleston. It was decided that the persecution of Boston was so important that all the colony should be consulted upon a plan of action. A meeting was arranged for July 6, 1774, "to consider . . . such steps as are necessary to be pursued, in union with all the inhabitants of our Sister Colonies, on this Continent . . . in order to avert the dangers impending . . . [because of] the late hostile acts of parliament against Boston . . ."

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, XXXIV, 181. *S. C. G.*, January 24, February 14, March 7, 14, November 21, 1774.

¹¹ *P. R.*, XXXIV, 6.

¹² Peter Force and M. Saint Clair, *American Archives*, Fourth Series (5 vol.; Washington, 1833), I, 370-371, 382-384, 531-534. Schlesinger, *Colonial Merchants*, pp. 373-374. *S. C. G.*, June 13, 20, 1774.

The Committee sent dispatches of this nature to the rest of the province.¹³

On the day of the big meeting 104 delegates from every region of the Province, except Granville County, St. John's, Colleton, and Christ Church Parish, arrived. They resolved against the latest British legislation and proposed measures to secure repeal. Delegates were to be sent to a colonial congress for formulating an immediate plan of non-intercourse against Great Britain.¹⁴ The proposals, particularly those for non-intercourse, aroused heated debate. The merchants disagreed that commercial non-intercourse should be so hastily adopted. They doubted that all the colonies would concur. Carolinians would stand alone as in December, 1770, and thus be ruined. The planters were not opposed to non-intercourse if they could ship off their rice in November. Accordingly, they employed delaying tactics. On the following day the merchants and planters joined to defeat the radicals on the boycott. The planters then joined the radicals enabling them to win a victory in that delegates would be sent to a congress of the colonies. Then the radicals were able to confer on the representatives' discretionary powers, "Which," they believed, "was gaining a grand point," but the entire issue hinged on the selection of the delegation.¹⁵

Candidates were apparently agreed upon by each party, although only the merchants' ticket is definitely known. The merchants, who had previously resolved against non-intercourse in their newly-founded Chamber of Commerce, planned to overcome the radicals by voting for Henry Middleton, Rawlins Lowndes, Charles Pinckney, Miles Brewton, and John Rutledge. It is probable that John Rutledge and Henry Middleton were planters' as well as merchants' nominees and that Christopher Gadsden and Thomas Lynch headed the mechanics' slate.

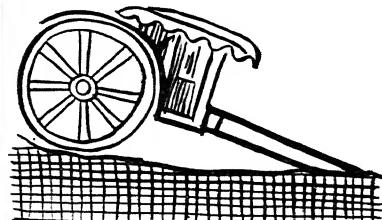
¹³ *Ibid.*, June 27, 1774; Schlesinger, *Colonial Merchants*, p. 374; Force, *American Archives*, I, 430-433, 525, 527, 531-534; *S. C. G.*, June 13, 20, 27, 1774; Drayton, *Memoirs*, I, 112-113.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, I, 126-128.

¹⁵ Drayton, *Memoirs*, I, 126-131. The policy of the delegation in Congress was still subject to approval by the meeting (Force, *American Archives*, I, 525, 527, 531-534). The quotation is probably Timothy's, who was subsequently elected Secretary to the Committee and possibly sent a descriptive letter, from which the quotation is drawn, to New York (Schlesinger, *Colonial Merchants*, p. 374; *S. C. G.*, July 11, 1774).

During the election the merchants gathered themselves and their clerks and marched in a body to the polls. By this display, however they defeated their own purpose, for the "opposite party" became thoroughly alarmed at this sight, ran through the town, and urged their followers to vote. As far as can be ascertained, the upshot was that a mechanic-planter delegation went to Philadelphia and that the planters held a majority of seats in the delegation composed of Henry Middleton, John Rutledge, Christopher Gadsden, Thomas Lynch, and Edward Rutledge. Though John Rutledge and Henry Middleton were on the merchants' ticket, they were planter representatives. The latter was a planter in practice; the former was a planter's lawyer. Gadsden and Lynch had been favorite candidates of the mechanics since 1765. What party supported Edward Rutledge is unknown. At the Congress, he voted with John Rutledge and Henry Middleton so that it was probably the planters' party which elected him.¹⁶

WILLIAM ROBINSON;



RETURNS his most
hearty thanks to all
his friends and customers,

There remained a strong sentiment for non-importation of British goods until the Congress should choose a course of action. Intimating that the merchants were under duress by the common folk, a letter to the radicals of New York related that "The people were so uneasy for agreements to be entered into that it was at last declared, on the part of the trade, that they would (of their own motion) countermand their orders, and would not import while the present troubles continue."¹⁷

¹⁶ Drayton, *Memoirs*, I, 131.

¹⁷ *American Archives*, I, 408-409, 525-527, 531-534.

On the day following the election, the General Meeting of the inhabitants of the province instituted a new standing committee to execute its resolves and correspond with similar committees in the other provinces. This body, designated the General Committee of the Province, was composed of fifteen merchants and fifteen mechanics representing the town and sixty-nine planters acting for the rest of the colony. Any twenty-two of its members could proceed on business; it was thereby easily subject to control by minority opinions, especially those of the town.¹⁸

From the nature of the Committee's decisions, the radicals must have held the ascendancy. The General Committee appointed a subcommittee to prevent engrossing and advancing the prices of European goods, a measure hardly pleasing to the merchants. As early as October, 1774, the General Committee received word that someone intended to export a large quantity of gunpowder from Carolina. Immediately, the committee resolved that the exportation of such articles as arms and ammunition was extremely imprudent. The supplies in question were therefore kept in the Province. Timothy, as Secretary of the Committee, often spoke for the radicals in his *gazette*, but hastened to calm his readers stating that weapons were needed "from the extraordinary war-like preparations of the Spaniards."¹⁹

The delegates returned from the Congress at Philadelphia, and the General Committee summoned another meeting of the inhabitants which was subsequently called the Provincial Congress. The committee rigged the election by issuing writs to "influential Gentlemen," that this meeting would have as liberal a cast as possible.²⁰

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, I, 526-527. The mechanics on the Committee of Correspondence were Peter Timothy, secretary, Joshua Lockwood, Daniel Cannon, George Abbot Hall, cabinet-maker, Bernard Beckman, Theodode Trezevant, tailor, John Fullerton, carpenter, Joseph Verree, William Trusler, William Johnson, Anthony Toomer, Timothy Crosby, John Berwick, James Brown, Edward Weyman and non-mechanic, Alexander Gillon. Though it is interesting to note that printer Timothy was considered a mechanic and that as such he was a leading radical, his trade was not considered as lowly as the others and he was thus more respected; this is indicated by the fact that he sat in the Commons House in the 1750's. He was not reelected, however, during this period (Hennig Cohen, *South Carolina Gazette* [Columbia, 1953]).

¹⁹ *S. C. G.*, October 17, 31, 1774.

²⁰ McCrady, *South Carolina under the Royal Government*, pp. 757-762, 804-806.

The legal government of South Carolina, nearly moribund at this point, enacted no laws, and its most astute members were elected to the Provincial Congress which gradually assumed the legislative powers of the Province. The mechanics' party placed at least thirteen artisans in the Congress. They were Peter Timothy, Cato Ash, Theodore Trezevant, Michael Kaltieson, Mark Morris, John Berwick, Simon Berwick, Joshua Lockwood, Anthony Toomer, Joseph Verree, Daniel Cannon, James Brown, and Edward Weyman, men who had been at the forefront, spearheading anti-British policy from the raucus days of '65. In 1776 William Johnson and George Flagg represented the Charleston mechanics, and this Congress offered Tunis Tebout the office of sheriff of Beaufort.²¹

The Provincial Congress met in January, 1775, and entwined the Province in a network of Committees of Correspondence, like those of Massachusetts. The Congress, in which the debtor parties were in the majority, forbade suit for debt in the courts without the permission of the local committee, which all but terminated the proceedings of the judicial branch of the royal government.²²

The Congress favored commercial non-intercourse, which had finally been formulated at Philadelphia. A fight ensued, however, over John Rutledge's provision excepting rice from non-exportation. The clause favoring the rice planters was opposed by the radicals who hoped for every possible measure to injure Great Britain. They aligned with representatives of the small farmers

²¹ Michael Kalteisen was not an artisan. He was a carter who left the Fellowship Society to form the German Friendly Society in 1766 which had a number of artisans in its membership. Also in view of later developments, it is interesting to note that Alexander Gillon was a member of the German Friendly Society (*Rules of the Fellowship Society; George Gongaware, History of the German Friendly Society* [Richmond, 1935], pp. 1-3, 206-219). The inference that the radical party managed this election (McCrady, *loc. cit.*), is further supported by the fact that Simon Berwick represented St. Matthew's Parish and George Ross, a tinsmith, represented the district between the Broad and Saluda rivers. However, the Provincial Congaree was more representative of the state than was the General Committee which was dominated by the town (*P. A.*, May 26, November 30, 1784; Prime, *The Arts and Crafts*, p. 306).

For a list of the members of the Congress, William Moultrie, *Memoirs of the American Revolution* (2 vol.; New York, 1802), I, 14; J. Almon, *Journal of the Provincial Congress of South Carolina, 1776* (London, 1776).

Tebout's appointment as sheriff, Force, *American Archives*, V, 620.

²² Drayton, *Memoirs*, I, 172, 174-175.

and indigo growers who felt that the rice planters, disregarding the other groups, had sought to insure their own wellbeing.

A long and heated debate nearly disrupted the Provincial Congress. Gadsden disclaimed responsibility for the clause and denounced it. Rutledge defended himself, his brother, and colleagues Middleton and Lynch. He said, in effect, that while the northern colonies had but little to risk through a complete halt in trade with the British, the economy of South Carolina would disintegrate if the planters were unable to sell their principal staple.

At length, by candlelight, a vote was cast. The radicals were winning the fight at this point, but it was inadvertently concluded to vote by voice. It is said that "by this mode, some were overawed, either by their diffidence, circumstances, or connexions," and so voted in favor of the clause. The radicals were beaten, 87 to 75.²³

In the rapid march of events, the controversy over shipping rice to Europe became unimportant, but this was the first time the planters' and the mechanics' parties crossed swords. Before this day, the fundamental differences which existed between the two groups were minimized. Afterward the breach became wider chiefly because of wartime economic difficulties.

For the time being, however, the parties were united; "In the present situation of things," Bull wrote to England, "unless Massachusetts should change, any changes in the Democratical Plan . . . will not probably be affected by jealousies naturally arising from the variety of private interests in the Planter, the Merchant, and the Mechanic, and are more likely to be the work of chance than design. The former from various circumstances of impatience under the self-denying Articles, and possible partiality in their Committees may occasion distrust, disunion, confusion, and at last a wish to return to the old established condition of government; whereas the least appearance of the latter, will put the discontented up on their guard, and prevail on them to suspend any animosities and cement in one common cause those various interests, which are otherwise very apt to break into parties and ruin each other."²⁴

²³ *Ibid.*, I, 166-173. Rutledge proposed that rice planters were to share profits with growers of indigo, which accordingly was arranged.

²⁴ P. R., XXXV, 77-81.

In March, 1775, the first decided threat to the Association arose. An inhabitant, returning from England, brought with him a consignment of horses, plate, and furniture intended for his personal use. The Committee permitted the landing of the horses. They reasoned the prohibitions of the Articles of Association did not apply. But to the mechanics the Articles were broken, and a mob threatened to kill the animals if they were landed. The Committee ordered an armed company to guard the cargo while it was brought ashore, but the majority of the company refused to obey the order. A petition from the inhabitants moved the Committee to call in more members of the body and to reconsider the question.²⁵

Great heat and confusion prevailed in the meeting. "Much ill blood was occasioned by the preemptory and sharp opposition made by the Mechanics" to landing the cargo "and by opprobrious terms of contempt towards them on the other." Gadsden begged the body to reverse its decision, John Rutledge contended that the animals be permitted to land, but the mob continually interrupted debate. When Edward Rutledge, who was most responsible for the original ruling, censured the mob "he was received with a clamour." Some of the debaters left in insult and anger, "much mortified by a disregard shown their harangues." The remainder of the Committee voted not to land the freight, 35 to 34.²⁶

The Association was saved. Had the mechanics lost the issue, trivial as it seems, the consequences would have been disastrous. Lieutenant-Governor Bull noted that "if this question had been carried in the affirmative" the merchants "would have considered it as a Recession of the Non-Importation Article and immediately sent to England for goods as usual. This example would probably have been followed by New York and the other Colonies."

"The heats seem a little cooled," Bull recounted, after the deliberations of the Committee, "But some resentment" remains "ready to hand to break out on any future occasion," for the "many headed power of the People, who have hitherto been obediently

²⁵ *Ibid.*, Drayton, *Memoirs*, I, 182-187.

²⁶ *Ibid.*; P. R., XXXV, 81-82; also *S. C. G.*, March 27, 1775.

made use of by their numbers and occasional riots to support the claims set up in America, have Discovered their own strength and importance" and now will not be "so easily governed by their former Leaders. . . ." ²⁷

3. *The Plebeans . . . for War*

On May 8, 1775, the Committee of Charleston received news of the Battle of Lexington in Massachusetts and next day, Crouch's *Country Journal* contained an account of the hostilities. It was now apparent now that the policy of peaceful coercion to gain economic and political concessions from the mother country was at an end. With the resort to arms, "men, could act under cover no longer." ²⁸

Whether the craftsmens' party desired revolution at an earlier date than 1775 is unknown. The rank and file probably did not wish separation before the outbreak of hostilities, or they only vaguely thought of their resistance to the British as steps logically leading to that event. In the case of their own leaders, however, independence may have been desired from the beginning. Years after this achievement, John Rutledge recalled that William Johnson, the blacksmith, was "the man who first moved the ball of revolution in Charleston." Again, in 1777, in a letter to Benjamin Franklin, Peter Timothy undoubtedly refers to someone of the mechanics in this matter. He said "... the Opposition to Tyranny was raised by a single inconsiderable Man here, under all the discouragements imaginable, even Gadsden doubting whether it could be attempted.—that when the Spirit was raised it was to be kept up and improved, against strenuous and indefatigable open and secret Enemies." ²⁹

Who was the "inconsiderable man"? Whether it was Johnson, Tebout, Verree, Cannon, or Weyman, or Timothy himself, may never be known, for evidence does not incontrovertibly point to

²⁷ P. R., XXXV, 79-80. Bull was of course referring to the spokesmen of the "people," like Gadsden.

²⁸ C. J., May 9, 1775; Drayton, *Memoirs*, I, 246.

²⁹ Johnson, *Traditions and Reminiscences*, p. 30; Douglas C. McMurtrie, editor, *Letters of Peter Timothy Printer of Charleston, South Carolina, to Benjamin Franklin* (Chicago, 1935), p. 18.

one or another as a prime mover of revolt. Yet one among these five appears outstanding chiefly because of his activities and apparent influence. He was Edward Weyman, the upholsterer. He was founder of the Fellowship Society, Messenger of the House since 1765, a member of the Committee of Correspondence in 1774, a representative in the First Provincial Congress in 1775, a member of the Secret Committee, usually of the inner circle of Revolutionaries in 1775 and 1776, and a member of a *Special Committee* to secure the province against an insurrection of slaves or counter-Revolutionary moves.³⁰

By the summer of 1775, menaced by the British, the mechanics desired armed resistance. On the eve of elections in August, the parties of the town met to choose their candidates. After the merchants had selected a list of ten men, apparently inclined toward peace, to represent them in the Provincial Congress, Timothy related to a friend that "the mechanics are not thoroughly pleased"; "they also will have a meeting this week." "In regard to War & Peace," he continued, "I can only tell you that the Plebeians are still for War—but the noblesse perfectly pacific—not like your chimerical Quixotical anti-pacificals, high admirals, & Associates."³¹

The mechanics themselves were by no means completely united. Evidently there was a conservative minority, silent, for the most part, and until 1780 lacking leadership. By their actions, a few exhibited disagreement with the Revolutionary movement. On one occasion, John Fisher, the former partner of Thomas Elfe, was apprehended by the Committee in a violation of an order of Congress. He had attempted to export food from the Province by way of Georgia after the Committee in view of the situation then existing had decided that no supplies should be sent out of the colony. Similarly, Philip Tidymon, somewhat of an aristocratic mechanic, being a planter and silversmith, incurred the displeasure of the Committee for secretly preparing a shipment of

³⁰ Drayton, *Memoirs*, I, 162, 221, 231. Chapman J. Milling, editor, *Colonial South Carolina [South Caroliniana]*, Robert Lee Meriwether, general editor] (Columbia, 1951), pp. xix-xx.

³¹ Joseph W. Barnwell, editor, "Correspondence of Arthur Middleton," *S. C. H. G. M.*, XXXVII (July, 1926), 131.

rice for export. Tidyman died during the war, but, significantly, his wife remained a thorough-going Loyalist.³²

Mechanics of Scottish nativity were also constantly suspected of siding with the English point of view. Perhaps unjustly, they were attacked in the press by a native Carolinian, whereupon a "Scots Mechanic" answered the tormentor with "The Day is approaching when every man will be tried. It will then be seen, whether our Class are not determined to be free. I dare be bold to affirm, Sir, that hardly a Man of us will be found to withhold his Concurrence, in whatever measures the . . . Inhabitants . . . think necessary and expedient to be adopted, for the Preservation of the Just Rights of every American."³³

The newly won political successes of the radical mechanics and their policies caused a great deal of jealousy and discontent among the ultra-conservatives and some of the plain people of the town. Their sentiments were reported to the Committee by underlings acting as informers. For example, the Committee was told that one Charles Webb called that body "a set of Mechanical Rascals, & that they consisted of Butchers, Taylers & Coblers & Hop'd that his Father," who was in trouble with the Committee, "wo'd not obey aney Summons from Them. . . ." At another time, it was said that "it was a Pit'y their was not a Gallows in charlestown to hang all the Americans in a string, & as for the Committee They were a Lousey Sett. Blackgards, such as Butchers & Taylers. . . ."³⁴

As early as 1774, the Anglican assistant rector of Saint Michael's Church made the mistake of reproaching the radicals in a sermon. He told his parishioners "we pry into our neighbors secrets," misjudge them, hold them in contempt, ruin their reputation and

³² John Fisher was absolved from the offense (*Journals of the Council of Safety for the Province of South Carolina: Collections of the South Carolina Historical Society [1859]*, III, 118, 185). Drayton, *Memoirs*, I, 255. Mrs. St. Julien Ravenel, *Charleston: The Place and the People* (New York, 1906), 297.

³³ *S. C. G.*, July 4, 1774.

³⁴ A. S. Salley, editor, "Papers of the First Council of Safety of the Revolutionary Party in South Carolina, June-November, 1775," *S. C. H. G. M.*, I (January, 1900), 63-65. The writer refers to the General Committee, on which sat the mechanics and merchants representing Charleston; offenders were punishable by the Committee according to "sound policy," giving it almost unlimited power; also, the Committee held tremendous powers in that the Congress could not be called except by a majority vote of the Committee. The potentialities of this latter power were not however exercised in the extreme (Drayton, *Memoirs*, I, 175, 256).

thereby sow seeds of discord. Every "idle Projector, who cannot, perhaps, govern his own household, or pay the debts of his own contracting, presumes he is qualified to dictate how the State should be governed, and to point out means of paying the debts of a nation. Hence too it is, that every silly Clown, and illiterate Mechanic, will take upon him to censure the conduct of his Prince or Governor, and contribute, as much as in him lies, to create and foment those misunderstandings, which being brooded by discontent, and difference . . . come at last to end in Schisms in the Church, and Sedition and rebellion in the State . . . There is no greater instrument or Ornament of Peace than for every man to keep his own rank, and to do his own duty, in his own station, without usurping an undue authority over his neighbour, or pretending to censure his superiors in matters wherein he is not himself immediately aggrieved."³⁵

The minister was either foolhardy or extremely courageous. The parish of Saint Michael was a stronghold of the craftsmen. The sermon caused an uproar, and the vestry was petitioned to remove him. Even though many of the loudest complainers were not members of the church, the preacher was dismissed. Later in June, 1776, Robert Cooper, the rector, suffered the same treatment for praying that the King defeat his enemies.³⁶

In June, 1775, it was brought to the attention of the Committee that Lochlin Martin, a small merchant, and one James Dealy noised about the "good news" that Negroes, Roman Catholics, and Indians were being armed by the British. The Committee decided to make an example of the pair by tarring and feathering them. The order was written by William Henry Drayton, who had become an avowed radical, and Edward Weyman, member of the Secret Committee. Accordingly, to the horror of sensible minds, the two unfortunates were carted through the town, and for the first time, people saw the mob at its worst.³⁷

³⁵ Fredrick Dalcho, *An Historical Account of the Protestant Episcopal Church in South Carolina* (Charleston, 1820), pp. 200-203; George W. Williams, *St. Michael's Charleston* (Columbia, 1951), pp. 29, 33-38, 312; Wallace, *Henry Laurens*, p. 154.

³⁶ Williams, *St. Michael's*, pp. 29, 33-38, 312.

³⁷ Drayton, *Memoirs*, I, 273-274, 300-302. G. G., June 10, 1774; June 9, 1775; Martin's apology is in C. J., July 25, 1775.

Meanwhile, the Provincial Congress had prescribed that all the inhabitants take an oath of association to defend the colony in the event of a British attack. Offenses to British officials began shortly thereafter. For damning the Committee, for instance, the Gunner of Fort Johnson was given a beating and then "a new suit of Clothes . . . without the assistance of a single taylor." While they carted "the Wretch" "through the streets, a mob of 300 or 400 people, many of whom were the provincial soldiery, stopped at every non-associator's and tory's house. At Fen. Bull's they stopt, call'd for Grog; had it; made Walker drink D-n to Bull, Threw a bag of feathers into his Balcony, & desired he would take care of it till his turn came; & that he would charge the Grog to the Acct. of Ld. North." Finally, Gunner Walker was left at the door of Dr. Milligen-Johnston, his Majesty's surgeon to the Carolina forces, who had been visited previously by carpenters Cannon and Fullerton, blacksmith Johnson, and upholsterer Weyman to warn him to sign the association. The temper of the mob was so bad at this time that "there was scarce a non-subscriber who did not tremble," and Robert Wells, the Loyalist printer, "had his Shop close shut."³⁸

When acts of violence were not carried out, demonstrations were planned to parade British ineffectiveness to the multitude. On one of these occasions, an effigy of the Pope was set up in the most prominent place in town. With Weyman directing from inside, it made appropriate bows to all those royal officials, placemen, or persons who were disaffected to the popular cause and who preferred "Royalty to liberty and social happiness." In this connection, it was claimed by Drayton that Edward Weyman, the only mechanic who was a member of the Secret Committee, was "expressly nominated" for the Committee "*on account of the active and confidential services he could render.*"³⁹

The results of these threats, demonstrations, and acts of violence were that dissenters were cowed into silence. There began an exodus of royal officials and other conservatives. A few plain people

³⁸ Drayton, *Memoirs*, I, 285-286. Barnwell, "Correspondence of Arthur Middleton," 126-127, 129; Milling, *Colonial S. C.*, pp. xix-xxi.

³⁹ Drayton, *Memoirs*, I, 226-228.

quit the city, although at this time the Congress desired that they remain in the Province. Some mechanics who were in disagreement with their own kind also left Charleston. Outstanding among them was the printer Robert Wells who had kept one of the finest bookstores in America and, who, like his fellow emigrés, had contributed greatly to the social and economic wellbeing of the community.⁴⁰

4. *The Mechanics: Revolutionary Workers*

With a full scale military conflict imminent, there began a race against time to secure arms, powder, and ammunition for the defence of the Province. On April 21, 1775, the Secret Committee formed a Committee of Intelligence whose major function was to obtain war supplies. Here again the mechanics performed invaluable services. When it was possible, weapons were purchased, and at an early date Edward Weyman and John Gibbes, a radical merchant, were successful in quietly taking inventory of and purchasing all such available material in the town. These supplies were carefully hidden in the homes of the radicals.⁴¹

Sometimes craftsmen led or took part in raids on the royal magazines. One of the most daring of these was the foray on the State House. Having heard that gunpowder was stored there, a party consisting of Edward Weyman and some of the most respectable men in the town, including Drayton, who was a nephew of the Lieutenant-Governor Bull, broke into the place and made off with a considerable amount of arms and powder. On the following day, Bull examined the Commander of the Town Watch who had mounted guard nearby. The Commander said that he saw several persons about the State House, but he remained silent as to their identity. Bull next questioned one Mrs. Pratt, keeper of the State House, about the disappearance of the stores, and it

⁴⁰ Papers of Robert Wells: petitions, accounts, plats, and reports, MSS, S. C. Arch.; Robert W. Barnwell, "The Migration of Loyalists from South Carolina," *Proceedings of the South Carolina Historical Association* (1937), p. 34.

⁴¹ Drayton, *Memoirs*, I, 225-226; also the Committee was charged with obtaining information both public and private; this is what Joseph Verree refers to when he speaks of the "Secret Service." See also "Miscellaneous Papers of the General Committee, Secret Committee, and Provincial Congress, 1775," *S. C. H. G. M.*, VIII (April, 1907), 132, 139-140.

is said that "even, although threatened with the loss of her place, which, was mostly her support," she divulged no information.

The Lieutenant-Governor's patience was sorely tried, but upon the advice of the Council, he sent a mild explanatory message to the Commons House of Assembly, many of whose members participated in the raid. The House carried on the farce and consigned the message to a committee which officially and mischievously reported to the Governor: "That with all the inquiry your Committee have made, they are not able to obtain any certain intelligence relative to the removal of the public arms, and gun powder, as mentioned in his Honour's Message; but think there is reason to suppose, that some inhabitants of this Colony may have been induced to take so extraordinary and uncommon a step, in consequence of the late alarming accounts from Great Britain." Edward Weyman, Messenger of the House, who also had been one of the raiders, conveyed the information.⁴²

Similar raids were carried out on the magazines at Hobcaw, Charleston Neck, and other places. Weyman, Johnson, Verree, and Pritchard performed these confidential missions with the "feel of the halter" about their necks. That the artisans had risen to the position of responsibility and trust in the Revolutionary proceedings and government is in some measure indicated by a letter of Joseph Verree to the "Comity of Safty" the housewright was a member of the "Secret Service." At "North Edisstoe" he picked up 5,025 pounds of powder for the Committee who subsequently sent it to the Continental Congress.⁴³

The artisans were also employed in making arms and other items. For example, William Barty, a potash maker, told the Secret Committee that he was dissatisfied with working for the royal government; so he offered his services to the Revolutionaries. He would make gunpowder if they would find the materials and grant him £500 "to purchase proper machines and utensils for carrying

⁴² Drayton, *Memoirs*, I, 221-225.

⁴³ Johnson, *Traditions and Reminiscences*, pp. 51-58. William Johnson was also a member of this expedition. The Rebel parties intercepted this powder before it arrived at St. Augustine (Salley, "Papers of the First Council of Safety," 66; *Collections*, II, 43-44, 47, 50, 54-55, 66).

on the business" and also pay him 10 shillings for every pound of powder; he proposed to secure his own labor. Apparently, the offer was accepted, for Barty appears in the accounts of the Committee for powder received. Similarly William Johnson was given scrap metal to mold into cannon balls, and another blacksmith, James Duncan, reported that he did £52,000 worth of work for the cause. In fact, most of the manufacturing mechanics were called upon at this time. Gunsmiths, saddlers, tailors, and founders were hired by the Committee for supplying the militia. Shipwrights and ropemakers served the Naval Commission. Paul Pritchard, the radical boatwright, was given charge of the public shipyard.⁴⁴

In the fall of 1775, after the British evacuated the forts and boarded their warships lying just outside the harbor, the mechanics put the forts in a position of defence, for which incidentally they received a large share of the money appropriated for this purpose by the Provincial Congress. Daniel Cannon supervised the constructing of the embattlement at Sullivan's Island. He was given £4,000 for materials and workmen for the job and a guarantee of compensation for any boats destroyed or Negroes killed or maimed by the enemy. James Brown undertook the repair of Fort Johnson, and Tunis Tebout, with a group of four gentlemen, was sent with £3,200 to place Fort Lyttleton on the defensive.⁴⁵

General Moultrie said the batteries about Charleston were enlarged and new ones were erected and that "the mechanics (almost to a man) were hearty in the cause and went cheerfully to work whenever they were called upon." Even with this, the mechanics had occasional difficulties. In the records of the Committee of Safety there is an account of repeated fist fights between a carpenter and an officer of the militia in command of the battery

⁴⁴ Some of the mechanics mentioned in defence work are: John Horbeck, housewright, "for building a furnace to cast shot"; David Burger, gunsmith; William Denny, saddler, Thomas Doughty, carpenter; Thomas Smith, founder; Job Palmer, carpenter; John Benoit, carpenter; John Bonsall, gunsmith; James Toussinger, carpenter; James Oiphant, engraver; James Callaghan, saddler; Hugh Crawford, gunsmith; Richard Latham, gunsmith; Jacob Warley, saddler; John Russel, shipwright; Henry Deblloom, carpenter; and Daniel O'Neal, rope maker (*ibid.*, II, 65-67, III, 86-87, 146, 193-194, 224, 230-232, 241, 249, 253, 266; Papers of James Duncan, blacksmith, MSS, S. C. Arch.).

⁴⁵ *Collections*, III, 40, 62, 167-168; Salley, "Papers of the First Council of Safety," II, 260-261. Almon, *Journal of the Provincial Congress*, 1776, p. 76.

which the worker was building. Cases of indolence also troubled the patriots, though rarely. A payroll of an officer in charge of a group of carpenters contained full compensation for all the men except two: William Cummings and John Fey, "lazy, lurking fellows at the Xcut saw, one generally out looking for the other, and did but 5 shillings worth of work each."⁴⁶

The carpenters who worked at Fort Johnson received but 15 shillings currency per day, at least 15 shillings below their probable standard, and also a gill of rum each, "provided they performed a good day's work." Later, however, they were raised by 15 additional shillings plus the rum. Those who appeared to be master carpenters were also allowed the same boost, making their compensation 45 shillings per day; the same quantity of liquor was included.⁴⁷

When the British finally launched their attack on the city, the townsmen were reasonably ready for them. The part that the mechanics played in this battle or in subsequent engagements appears to have been small. They offered their best services, first, as politicians, second, as workers, not soldiers. On the other hand, some of the craftsmen fought. For instance, carpenter Cannon held the rank of captain in the Charleston Battalion of Artillery of which Thomas Elfe, Junior, like his father, a cabinet-maker, was also a member. Henry Timrod, the tailor, was likewise a Revolutionary soldier. In 1781 Thomas Sumter's regiment enlisted artisans, though these men were probably not mechanics of Charleston. Notwithstanding, after the war, a song commemorated one of the men wounded in the Battle of Fort Moultrie. It was sung to the tune of "Yankee Doodle":⁴⁸

The first of June the British fleet
Appear'd off Charleston harbour;
The twenty-eight attack'd the fort,
And wounded Young the barber.

⁴⁶ Moultrie, *Memoirs*, I, 94-95; "Order Book of Barnard Elliott," *Charleston Year-book*, 1889, pp. 151-153; *Collections*, III, 64, 70, 74.

⁴⁷ "Order Book of Barnard Elliott," pp. 151-153, 172.

⁴⁸ *Collections*, III, 38. Papers, Petitions, and Accounts of Thomas Elfe, Jr., MSS, S. C. Arch. These artisans were paid in booty (J. H. R., 1782, p. 91, February 13, 1782). Thompson, *Henry Timrod*, pp. 9-11. *P. A.*, June 18, 1785.

5. Economic Conditions: 1776-1780

Failing at Fort Moultrie, June 27-28, 1776, to reduce Charleston, the British turned their attention to the subjugation of the northern provinces. The city enjoyed comparative peace almost to the end of the decade. The residents returned to their occupations, but because of the war, their economy was destined to be abnormal.

As early as 1775, scarcity of food beset the townsmen, and from the outbreak of hostilities, prices began to soar. The markets were scantily provided with grain and meats, in particular, and these commodities sold at exorbitant prices. In an effort to alleviate this distress, the Revolutionary government forbade the exportation of all commodities and ordered that meats be brought to market ready dressed; but these measures afforded little relief.⁴⁹

Immediately the people blamed forestalling as the cause of shortage. The government threatened to advertise the names of those who were monopolizing food supplies. The brunt of the town dwellers' criticisms fell upon the farmers and planters. One who signed himself "Poplicola" wrote that "Our country never produced greater abundance of provisions . . . yet, by some sinister management, worm-eaten corn is now sold for twenty-five shillings a bushel, which, at other times, would be thought so bad, as to be judged only fit for beasts; all other articles, even of the most inferior kinds, are also sold, at the like extravagant rates, though those are known to abound in the country; many of which are now perishing on hand; and this with no other view, than by withholding them, to keep up the price in this town."⁵⁰ He thought that a committee should be sent into the country to determine the size of the harvests, of which the "overplus" should then be directed to the markets.

Rising prices became far worse because of the decreasing buying power of money. The Provincial Congress printed more than £7,500,000 in paper money to pay for the costs of the war between

⁴⁹ *G. G.*, January 19, February 9, May 26, 1775, August 21, 1776, June 4, September 28, October 8, 1778; *C. J.*, May 30, 1775; *G. S. S. C.*, June 24, 1778.

⁵⁰ *S. C. G.*, November 28, 1775. *G. G.*, August 21, 1776; April 24, May 29, 1777; February 19, 1778.

1775 and 1779. Long suffering from the lack of currency, the economy of the state was aided by these issues, and the value of this Carolina currency did not fall appreciably until 1777.⁵¹

In the meantime, the Continental Congress sought the same means of meeting its obligations, but the "superabundant" Continental money quickly became worthless. People of the North lost faith in American paper issues chiefly because of the military successes of the British and their assiduous policy of counterfeiting state and congressional bills and circulating them along with the true currency.⁵²

All American money soon found its level. Quantities of Continental paper were sent southward for the purchase of supplies to prosecute the rebellion. Consequently, Carolina money also fell so that an article selling for a shilling, in 1777, cost more than 61 shillings by May, 1780.⁵³

Depreciation brought economic chaos to Charleston. After January, 1777, speculation was rampant. Fortunes fell or were made overnight. Prices soared to unbelievable heights. Real estate traded hands like poker chips, and the mechanics were having a grand time in the game. Edmund Egan, formerly a successful brewer who had had to retire because he could not get the raw materials for his trade, bought and sold five town houses at a profit of £6,000 in paper currency in one week. At the time of his death in 1787, he held a third ownership in a distillery purchased in 1778 but inoperative until 1790, some household and brewer Negroes, and a note for £1,142, funds he had loaned the State in the Revolution which was later redeemed for about \$70. So it was with most of the master mechanics.

The laboring element was also in continual quest of bargains. Auctions were always well attended, so much, that the legislature intervened and unrealistically accused the auctioneer of raising the price of goods. It passed an act prohibiting sales at vendue

⁵¹ David Ramsay, *History of the Revolution of South Carolina* (2 vol.; Trenton, 1785), II, 77-84.

⁵² *Ibid.*, II, 77-84, 95-96; P. R., XXXVI, 78-79; Worthington Chauncey Ford, *Journals of the Continental Congress, 1774-1789* (34 vol.; Washington, 1904-1914), VII, 1048-1052.

⁵³ Ramsay, *Revolution of S. C.*, II, 95-96.

which, it stated, "raised the price of almost every necessary article to a most exorbitant and expensive height" and "impoverished many honest handcraftsmen and others, who, by mis-spending and loitering their time . . . have greatly neglected their respective occupations."⁵⁴

In general, the mechanics did not thrive under these wartime conditions. Tanners were forbidden by law to export their product, which precluded their only means of obtaining specie. The artisans discharged their obligations to the merchants in cheap money, but debts owed by the planters and farmers were paid to the mechanics in the almost valueless paper. Wage-earning craftsmen also suffered. Their wages did not keep pace with the cost of living. A few had to sell their holdings like the bricklayer and builder, Timothy Crosby, who sold his property so, as he said, he could be "better enabled to pay his taxes, and fortify himself and his family against the unworthy practices of the present set of monopolizers and extortioners."⁵⁵

The artisans, as well as the merchants, were also victimized by bargain-hunting consumers who had wares credited to them far beyond their financial means. They then awaited a legal suit, having by that time accumulated sufficient depreciated currency to settle the debt. The disgruntled tailors of the town announced in a similar connection that since they were "obliged to pay ready money for everything they purchase, they expect, for the future, to receive such price for their work as are Current when paid for, and not such as were Current when . . . delivered." They added that they preferred "taking provisions . . . for their work," rather than currency.⁵⁶ Watchmaker Joshua Lockwood fumed in a newspaper that he and other tradesmen were suffering from "Villains and Sharpers living upon their Property." "Is it not in the Power

⁵⁴ *G. S. S. C.*, December 8, 1779; *G. G.*, April 24, September 25, 1777. Cooper, *Statutes*, IV, 395. Richard Walsh, "Edmund Egan, Charleston's Rebel Brewer" *S. C. H. [G.J.M.] LVL* (October, 1955).

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, IV, 376; Robert Beard, tinsmith, Petitions, Accounts, and other papers, MS, S. C. Arch.; *G. G.*, October 1, 1779; Records of the Court of Common Pleas, 1777-1785, MS, S. C. Arch., tend to indicate that a much larger number of artisans were creditors during these years than before the war, and a larger number of craftsmen brought suit for unpaid debts during the occupation than before 1775.

⁵⁶ *Charleston Gazette*, January 18, 1780.

of a Jury to judge of a vexatious . . . suit?" he asked and, further, "In God's Name then, why should we remain a lawless banditti?" But justice was powerless to help such mechanics. It is noteworthy that as a result of these conditions Lockwood quit watchmaking until the end of the war and entered "the coasting business."⁵⁷

Scarcities of materials and tools prevented other craftsmen from continuing at their trades. Richard Magrath, the cabinet-maker, informed his friends that he was under the "disagreeable necessity of declining his business for want of materials." He became a ferryman instead, but was unsuccessful in this venture. When Magrath left ferrying, another cabinetmaker, John Packrow, took over. He also had his problems, evidently. His enterprising Negro servant left him and returned to town to take up his master's former trade.⁵⁸

The outbreak of war did not terminate the artisans' long-standing grievance against England. English and Scottish wares continued to enter South Carolina. At the beginning of the war many new merchants replaced those who were unwilling to venture their fortunes under wartime conditions and these quickly opened commerce with France. However, only four of sixteen vessels, richly laden with Carolina commodities, managed the long and risky voyage. Thus discouraged, the merchants turned to the Danish, French, and Dutch West Indies. Importations from these places proved unacceptable to the Americans, who from long habit preferred British wares. The islanders therefore imported British goods for reshipment to America. Probably English manufactures did not flood the artisans' home market as greatly as previously, but there were enough British goods for sale to ruffle and annoy the Charleston mechanics.⁵⁹

Finally tragedy struck the tradesmen, indeed, all the people of the city. On the night of January 15, 1778, fire broke out in the house of one More, a baker. The flames spread, enveloping and destroying a considerable portion of the town, including 252

⁵⁷ C. G., January 16, 1777; August 13, 1778; Ramsay, *Revolution of S. C.*, II, 93-94.

⁵⁸ G. S. S. C., July 21, 1777; August 5, 12, 1778.

⁵⁹ Ramsay, *Revolution of S. C.*, II, 75-76, 86-88; Macpherson, *Annals of Commerce*, III, 589-591, IV, 35-36.

dwelling-houses. Many mechanic-establishments were consumed. Witnesses estimated the damage at £1,000,000 sterling. Morale was at a low ebb. Tories were accused but no reprisals followed. Crouch reported the fire, lamenting it "formed one of the most dismal scenes of woe and distress that can possibly be conceived." The ruins were to remain a testimony of sorrow until the post war period.⁶⁰

Thus did economic unrest and misfortune form the backdrop to the tumultuous politics of the period.

6. The Myrmidons

On March 26, 1776, the Provincial Congress instituted a new government for South Carolina, altering the political structure only slightly. As a natural consequence of the long struggle for predominance, the Lower House emerged more powerful than its royal predecessor. It was popularly elected and chose the President, who was also commander-in-chief of the armed forces, the Legislative Council, which was an Upper House of the legislature, and a Privy Council of advisors to the President.⁶¹

However, the government of 1776 displeased democratic minded Carolinians, which included the craftsmen. In the first place it was devised by the conservatives and moderates without resorting to a convention of representatives of the electorate. The framers had merely drawn up their plan and passed it as an ordinary act. It was distinguished by few breaks with the past, although the people indirectly elected the members of the Legislative Council. The Anglican establishment was untouched, and as in colonial times, the Privy Council still exercised the powers of the Court of Chancery, which had probably become extremely unpopular at this point with merchants and mechanics plagued with

⁶⁰ Peter Timothy and Philip Tidymon were among the mechanics who lost property in the fire (*G. G.*, May 7, 1778; Charleston Wills, 1783-1786, Book A, XX, 95-96). The rope walk of hemp-maker Daniel O'Neal was destroyed (*G. S. S. C.*, July 28, 1779). South Carolina Miscellany, MS, Presbyterian College, Clinton, South Carolina; William L. King, *The Newspaper Press of Charleston* (Charleston, 1882), pp. 22-24.

⁶¹ Francis Newton Thorpe, *Federal and State Constitutions . . . and other Organic Laws . . . forming the United States of America* (9 vol.; Washington, 1909), VII, 3241-3248.

"vexatious suits." Finally to the disgust of the radicals, the independence of the state was yet undeclared. Under the constitution of 1776, Carolina's government was temporary, pending adjustment of the differences between England and America.⁶²

Throughout its brief existence, the constitution and its framers were under fire. The leading critic was Christopher Gadsden, spokesman of the artisans, who had advocated independence in the Provincial Congress as early as February 10, 1776, and who, therefore, had drawn the disapproval of the substantial element of the state. His opponent, John Rutledge, maintained even as late as March, 1776, that an accommodation with Great Britain was desirable, and he continued to speak of the state as a colony. Political differences, even though necessitating recourse to arms, should be settled without destroying the Empire, according to Rutledge who represented the conservative aristocracy.⁶³

In March, 1778, the assembly debated the question of a new constitution. Despite Rutledge's forceful protests and retirement from the presidency, another organic law was approved by the legislature. It provided for a bicameral legislature to be chosen by the electorate. Under Gadsden's prodding, the Anglican Church was disestablished and the tie with Great Britain finally severed. The Act of 1778 approved the Declaration of Independence unequivocally, stating that it was, indeed, "framed suitable to that great event."⁶⁴

The new scheme of government should have pleased insurgents like the mechanics and their radical friends in Charleston. Yet it was regarded with suspicion. The unpopular Privy Council still sat as the Court of Chancery for the state. In addition there was displeasure on the part of the radicals with the political situation. Upon Rutledge's retirement as president, Rawlins Lowndes, one whom the artisan party had neither supported nor trusted, was

⁶² *Ibid.* Thus watchmaker Joshua Lockwood's complaint about "the stoppage of the courts" since 1775 has meaning. Lockwood was an important complainer; he was one of the leading radicals and a member of the first Provincial Congress (*G. G.*, January 16, 1777).

⁶³ McCrady, *History of South Carolina*, 1775-1780, pp. 235-245.

⁶⁴ Thorpe, *State Constitutions*, VII, 3248-3257.

elected to complete Rutledge's term until the new constitution became effective in November, 1778.⁶⁵

In the meantime, an oath renouncing allegiance to George III had been required of officers of the Crown and of people whom the president and council suspected of holding anti-Whig views. The remainder of the Tories of the state could follow their occupations while they quietly nurtured their grievances against rebellion until April 28, 1778. At this time, in the spirit of the new constitution, all inhabitants above sixteen years of age were directed to declare their allegiance to South Carolina and to defend it against the Crown.⁶⁶

Another purge took place, especially in Charleston, where the radical mechanics became the leading persecutors of the "Friends of British Government." As a result, a large number of people, most of whom were probably residents of the city, left the state for Florida, New York, the West Indies, or England. Among the emigrés were some mechanics of royalist principles, like the known conservatives John Wyatt, carpenter, and John Fisher, cabinet-maker. These artisans were joined by a few others who had performed defence work for the Revolutionary Committees in 1776, and their leaving possibly was caused by economic dissatisfaction rather than political disagreement with the regime.⁶⁷

Enforcement of the oath throughout the state proved physically impossible. Chiefly for this reason, Rawlins Lowndes, acting with the Privy Council and advised by Gadsden, issued a proclamation for extension. The mechanics and other radicals, fearing arbitrary

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶⁶ Cooper, *Statutes*, I, 135-151.

⁶⁷ Clinton Papers, MS, William M. Clements Library, Ann Arbor, Michigan [photostatic copies, South Caroliniana Library, Columbia, South Carolina]; *G. S. S. C.*, July 15, 1778; *C. G.*, May 7, June 14, 1778. Departing Mechanics who had been active in 1776-78 for the Revolutionary government were Thomas Smith, founder, John Bonsall, gunsmith, James Duncan, blacksmith (James Duncan Papers). Other mechanics who quit the province were: Robert Frogg, tailor; William Lawrence, carver; William Benny, baker; Benjamin Lord, leather dresser; John Smith, tallow chandler; Daniel Manson, tailor and merchant; John Muncrieffe, cabinet-maker; Hugh Pollock, saddler; John Grant, saddler and shoemaker; John Corman, carver; John Smith, soap boiler; William Fell, tailor; David Swanson, blacksmith; George Smithson, jeweler and goldsmith; John Brown, tobacconist; William Tweed, ship carpenter; Thomas Harper, silversmith; Thomas Raven, butcher (Barnwell, "Migration of Loyalists from South Carolina," pp. 35-36).

rule by the aristocratic element in favor of the Tories, became tumultuous. On June 5, a riot occurred. Gadsden, who was its chief victim, was its only reporter. In confusion and anger, he described the following scene: The proclamation "was hardly got into the sheriffs hands before some myrmidons alarmed the town" that "we were setting up a proclamn. agt. law" which was "going to ruin their Liberties and what not! the proclamation I believe was never read, a Deputation was sent to the Presidt of Doctr Budd, Capt. Mouatt, Joshua Ward, and some others. His proclamation was returned to him in my prescence wh. of itself was insult enough, but besides that the spokesmen Mr. Ward told the President he thought the people were right, & would lose the last Drop of Blood to support them, this I thought so high an insult that I immediately began with Ward, sarcastically applauded his Heroism & great exertion for the public good. In return he told me I was a madman, but first took care to sneak out of my reach, however had he not I should have done nothing more as I was prepared than what I did, laugh in his face." ^{ss}

At a meeting that evening, Dr. Budd was "put in the chair, every press" was "prohibited from printing the proclamation & the magistrates deterred from granting certificates" to penitents who had once openly opposed the state but who were now desirous of declaring their allegiance. "At this," Gadsden related, "I, Don Quixotte Secondus, who never had acted the magistrate before, gave out publicly that I would give out the Oath of Fidelity & certificates to any applicants by the 10th & accordingly did so to many. I was in the midst of the people where I found them chiefly a mere mob, with here and there some who ought not to have been & I was sorry to see there & had reason to suspect *that day* much negative impulse [...] I told them I advised the measure & that they should put a Halter about my neck and hang me if they thought it wrong—that they had a constitutional remedy, that they might impeach the President and Council if they acted improperly, & that they had better do that. But all to no purpose. In my opinion if they were not set on, the old Leven," the con-

^{ss} South Carolina Miscellany.

servatives, were "at least not sorry for it, as it was echoed amongst the people, that had Mr. R. _____ been president" instead of Lowndes "nothing of this sort would have happen'd. They met again in the 10th & after some Fuss between young Peronneau . . . & Dr. Budd, the latter was again placed in the chair and after a variety of & motions amongst the last to impeach Presdt. & Council they at last came to the Resolution" that the oath ought to be enforced.

Clearly Gadsden recognized in this disturbance his own newly-earned unpopularity. He also noticed the handiwork of men who were attempting to discredit not only the old but the new Privy Council. He wrote to Thomas Bee: "if the Proclamn. of the President in Conseqe of a recommendation of Congress & the Advice of the privy Council is to be counteracted & defeated by a Managed misinformed part of the Town dexterously practiced on (imperceptibly I am fully persuaded to themselves) by the belloving Tools of a few ill intending restless disappointed self important Men behind the Scenes (as I verily believe was the Case of the 5th of June); if the Magistrates are to be intimidated"; if the processes "are to be stopt at their Nod & all this to pass without proper Notice the privy Council will soon be of little use & must rapidly dwindle into that Insignificancy . . . & Contempt wch. an Artful & indefatigable Cabal earnestly wish to see them in & will miss no *other* sly Opportunity to bring about—The next step to making that necessary & useful part of the Constitution contemptible will be of course to expunge them altogether when it is found (as in the Nature of things must happen speedily if not timely prevented) that none but dastardly Trimmers Ambitious Caballers or interested Jobbers will serve in a Department rendered so low suspicious & dispicable." ⁶⁹

The disrespect shown Gadsden by the mob and the names of the men whom he mentions as leading figures in the riot of June evidence signs of a new alliance between the mechanics, radical merchants, and young lawyers. Dr. John Budd was a radical and a man of courage, proven during the attack on Charleston in 1776.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

Little else is known about him except that he had gained the approval of the mechanics party. He spoke for them after the war. Joshua Ward was a lawyer who often acted in behalf of merchants in cases of non-payment of debt, and in 1776, he was made treasurer of a society of fourteen merchants, headed by John Edwards, to encourage trade and set up an insurance company. Henry Peronneau, another principal in the riot over the oath of fidelity, was a young lawyer and at this time a rather unruly officer in the army. After the war, he rose to political popularity as a member of the radical organization—the Marine Anti-Britannic Society.⁷⁰



JOHN SPEISSEGGER, MUSICAL INSTRUMENT MAKER

The motives which cemented this new alliance became clearer after the war, but in 1778 Gadsden had plainly lost favor with the party which had made him a power in the politics of South Carolina and consequently a great figure since 1765 in forming the new nation. The rift over the proclamation accentuated basic differences. Before the war Gadsden and the mechanics agreed on the need for revolution, more particularly on constitutional than economic grounds. To Gadsden, enthusiasm for boycotts and advocacy

⁷⁰ *S. C. H. G. M.*, XXXIV (April, 1933), 78-79, IV (July, 1903), 209, II (January, 1901), 23, XXXIII (January, 1932), 2-5, XXI (January, 1920), 83; XVII (January, 1916), 8-9, III (July, 1902), 129; VIII (January, 1907), 21, 74, IX (April, 1919), 145. Joshua Ward Indenture, MS, South Caroliniana Library. *G. G.*, October 9, October 17, November 28; *G. S. S. C.*, September 15, 1777. Other directors of this insurance company, capitalized at £100,000, were Thomas Shubrick, William Price, Thomas Corbett, George Abbot Hall, Roger Smith, Josiah Smith, junior, Nathaniel Russell, John Dawson, Andrew Lord, Edward Lightwood, Samuel Legare, and Aaron Lockock, merchants and lawyers.

of encouragement for manufactures, once so ostentatiously displayed when he refused to wear the customary mourning at his wife's funeral, were mere acts of self-denial for anti-British weapons. To the mechanics these were matters of survival. As he recalled later, during the Revolution he had frequently reiterated that South Carolina was an agrarian province, that the plantation interest was the interest of all:

In his political principles he was an excellent representative of the liberal portion of the South Carolina aristocracy—insistent on the rights of self-government, but with standards of public order and official responsibility practically precluding anything more democratic than popular rights with aristocratic leadership. Despite impetuosity to the point of rashness, and a temper which he controlled with the greatest difficulty, his integrity and religious zeal, his courage, optimism, and energy made him an invaluable champion.

The mechanics no longer desired liberal, but aristocratic, champions. This break with them marked the climax of Gadsden's career. No longer acceptable to them, he was even less so to the conservatives who considered his views of too liberal a cast for their comfort. It was a disappointed Gadsden who wrote: "I am afraid we have too many amongst us who want again to be running upon every fancy to the Meetings of [the] liberty tree." Is this "not a disease amongst us far more dangerous than anything that can arise from the whole herd of contemptible, exportable Tories?"⁷¹

⁷¹ *South Carolina Miscellany*.

IV

OCCUPATION BY THE ENEMY

The mechanics and their radical cohorts underwent the rigors of military rule and captivity in 1780. The next two years were to be marked by trial. Collaboration or persecution being the only alternative some went over to the enemy. Frequently the artisans were forced to conform or starve. Nevertheless the number of actual loyalists among them was small, but this minority, encouraged by the invader, became particularly vocal and troublesome, especially to those craftsmen who wholly clung to their rebellious principles.

1. The Fall of Charleston

In 1780, political, economic, and social movements took a new turn with South Carolina's military disaster. After their repulse at Sullivan's Island, the British campaigned intensively in the northern states where they captured New York City in 1776. However, their hopes of victory in that section dimmed with the debacle of Saratoga and the subsequent American alliance with France. These together with their inability to crush General Washington's force necessitated a change in strategy. Part of the army was to remain in New York City. The rest of the forces were to wear down American resistance by destruction of shipping, encouraging and enlisting Loyalists, and occupying strategic port cities, chiefly in the South.¹

¹ Willard Wallace, *Appeal to Arms: A Military History of the American Revolution* (New York, 1951), pp. 134-168. Claude H. Van Tyne, *War of Independence* (New York, 1947), pp. 380-383.

For an excellent study on loyalty in Charleston see Ralph Louis Andreano and Herbert D. Werner "Charleston Loyalists: A Statistical Note," *S. C. H. [G.] M.*, LX (July, 1959), 167.

The British launched the Southern campaign in November, 1778, in Georgia, aided by a large number of militant Tories. Almost everything went well for them. On December 29, 1778, they took Savannah and were provided with a base of operations against Charleston. Prevost made an abortive attempt on the city in May, 1779. After thwarting American efforts to retake Savannah in October of that year, the British were in position to proceed against Charleston in earnest. Early in 1780, moving by way of Johns Island and James Island, General Clinton seized the southern bank of the Ashley River. After receiving reinforcements, he extended his lines to the Cooper River. British men of war under Admiral Arbuthnot successfully ran the batteries of Fort Moultrie, and Charleston, hemmed in by land and sea, was laid under seige.

Gadsden and many of the inhabitants believed that the town could be defended by General Lincoln's fifty-five hundred troops "hermetically" sealed within the defences of the city, but Clinton had too much power. As one historian points out: "The whole siege was a chapter of irresistible resources and minute thoroughness on the part of the British against the errors and weakness of the Americans, from the latter's deciding to crawl into the rat hole to their being smoked out of it." After the outer defences were taken by Clinton and an assault *en masse* mounted, Lincoln yielded up the city, a "mass surrender of United States Forces exceeded only by General Julius White's submission to the Confederates at Harpers Ferry in 1862 and General Jonathan Wainwright's capitulation to the Japanese at Bataan in 1942."

The loss of Charleston was staggering. The rest of the state soon succumbed to British arms. Not the least of the prizes taken were several of the state officials and the Radical Mechanics, Gadsden and others, by which means it would seem that both militarily and politically, the back of the rebellion was broken.²

² Wallace, *Appeal to Arms*, pp. 204-211. The campaigns in South Carolina and Georgia are based on Wallace, *History of South Carolina*, II, 180-202. Also, Alden, *The South in the Revolution*, pp. 227-242.

2. Government and Politics during the Occupations

Charleston underwent the rigors of military rule directly after its surrender. Clinton returned to New York, and Cornwallis took command of the British forces in the South. Under Cornwallis was the Commandant of Charleston, a post held successively by Brigadier-General Patterson, Colonel Balfour, and Major-General Leslie. Of the three officers, Lieutenant-Colonel Balfour was the most important, for he supervised affairs in the city for nearly all of the occupation period.

Nisbet Balfour's place was unenviable. David Ramsay, the Rebel historian of the *Revolution of South Carolina*, characterized Balfour for posterity as having "all the frivolous self importance, and all the disgusting insolence, which are natural to little minds when puffed up by their sudden elevation, and employed in functions to which their abilities are not equal." Yet people who were under Balfour's surveillance overlooked the fact that he labored under the direct orders of General Cornwallis. Balfour obeyed "to the letter" Cornwallis' harsh commands designed to crush the colonists. Cornwallis commended him: "You have done what few officers in our service are capable of doing and have voluntarily taken responsibility on yourself to serve your country and your friend."³

It was natural that Balfour would be held in contempt by Charlestonians. Yet he was a good British soldier. He distinguished himself at the Battle of Bunker Hill where he was severely wounded. He earned promotion for his conspicuous services in the capture of New York. After the war he was rewarded by the British with the high military office of aide-de-camp to the King, and subsequently commanded a British force in Flanders in the war against France.⁴

A facade of civilian government also was set up. The office of town-major was created, and justice was vested in a Board of Police which was placed under the Intendancy of James Simpson,

³ Ramsay, *Revolution of S. C.*, II, 263-264; Stephen Leslie and Sidney Lee, *The Dictionary of National Biography* (22 vol.; New York, 1908), II, 976-977.
⁴ *Ibid.*

former Attorney-General of the Province and one of the victims of the General Committee in 1775.⁵

When the first case came before the Board, a method of procedure was standardized. An aggrieved party petitioned the Intendant of Police, and the Board then summoned the defendant to answer charges. Three arbitrators were chosen, one for each side, and a third selected after mutual agreement by the defense and complainant. Their decisions were enforced by the Board of Police under the threat of imprisonment.⁶

With the approval of the Commandant, the Board of Police extended its powers over the life of the entire town. It governed the parishes, whose wardens and vestrymen were directly under its supervision. It secured Loyalist ministers for the churches. It controlled the commissioners of the markets and of the poor, secured fire wardens and even the street scavengers, and took over education. At the very beginning of the occupation, it claimed that education of youth in the free school was in a neglected and deplorable state and sought a teacher "whose Principles were unquestionably loyal."⁷

Thus for a time the town was given efficient, though in no sense, democratic government. The conditions under which it operated, however, were so adverse as to render its work nearly useless.

The first task of the British was to return people to the fold. Appeals pointing out the deficiencies of the Rebel regime, chiefly emphasizing economic hardships, were addressed to disgruntled American soldiers and tradesmen, "Those gallant Sons of Britain, Ireland and America, whose Errors or Misfortunes have compelled them to enlist under the Banners of a Rebel Congress, paid by the King of France, and devoted to his Will—who in return for their Services, for the Toils, Difficulties and Dangers they have undergone, have neither received the Pay nor Cloathing due them; and who, in a Word, are now experiencing the Want of almost every Necessary, as well as Comfort of Life;—Let such Men

⁵ Proceedings of the Board of Police, 1780-1782.

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ *Ibid.*

show the Spirit becoming Freemen; let them disengage themselves from so ignominious, disgraceful and unprofitable a Service.—Within the British lines, they will be received with Kindness, and may sell their Arms, Accoutrements and Horses; there Tradesmen may follow their Occupations, and be paid in solid Coin for their Work—Such Natives of the Old Country as wish to return Home, will have abundant Opportunities; while those who are desirous of enriching themselves with the Spoils of our Enemies, or are anxious to acquire Military Glory, may enter the Service of King George. *No Scarcity of Rum, Salt, Cloathing, Gold or Silver, in Charleston.*⁸

Such propaganda had considerable effect on the artisans. Many tradesmen returned to British allegiance and others, strangers to Charleston, swelled these ranks by arriving after the British occupied the city. Added to this number were the dissident tradesmen, the conservative wing of the mechanics party which was given new life by virtue of the British occupation. It seems to have been a point of British policy to weld this latter group into a new mechanics party, and give it direction.⁹

The prominent conservatives were given office but never a voice in the administration of the occupation. The prosperous upholsterer, Solomon Smith, received a commission and "rendered essential services" in the British army. John Rose, the shipwright, made his presence felt at this time by examining the petitions of the inhabitants who expressed their loyalty to the Crown. He was also placed on a British committee to return the royal shipyard, which, until 1780, was under the management of the Rebel, Paul Pritchard, to the possession of the Crown. James Cook, a carpenter of the town, was offered minor posts under the British rule along

⁸ "Letters to General Greene," *S. C. H. G. M.*, XVII (January, 1916), 7.

⁹ The mechanics on the list of these "Friends of Government" are: Leonard Askew, watchmaker; William Bowen, watchmaker; Benjamin Baker, carpenter; Nicholas Boden, printer; William Cameron, cooper; Gilbert Chambers, carpenter; James Cook, carpenter; John Carter, carpenter, who had been imprisoned by the Rebels for four years; James Dunning, saddler; William Edwards, saddler; Christopher Fitzsimons, chandler; John Fisher, cabinet-maker; William McHenry, cooper; James Mackie, cooper; William Mills, tailor; James Mills, baker; John Rose, shipwright; James Ross, carpenter; John Wood, tailor (Clinton Papers). Alexander Fraser, *Second Report of the Bureau of Archives for the Province of Ontario* (Toronto, 1905), Part I, 694-695, 1224; Burton, *South Carolina Silversmiths*, pp. 62, 79.

with a fellow carpenter, Gilbert Chambers. The son of printer Robert Wells, John, who, judging from his activities, seemed to be a leader of the group, monopolized all printing jobs. Rebel presses were silenced, and John Wells in his *Royal Gazette* worked as assiduously for loyalism as Timothy and Crouch had labored for revolution.¹⁰

As soon as Charleston fell to the British, its Loyalists drew up a petition which congratulated the British commanders upon their victory and asked that the loyal inhabitants be treated with clemency. The petitioners stated that "we cannot but consider the late attempt of Congress to subjugate the freemen of this province to their tyrannical domination, an added proof of their restless ambition, and of the wicked machinations of the contemptible remains of that aspiring faction; who have so recently exercised a despotic and lawless sway over us; we trust that every other hostile experiment, by the goodness of God, and your Lordships vigilance and animated endeavours, will be equally futile."¹¹

Thirty-two mechanics signed these addresses to the conquerors. Some of the artisans were undoubtedly Loyalists who depended largely upon British trade for their living and who were disconsolate over its cessation with the advent of war. An analysis of the list of the thirty-two names reveals that there were twenty-four who might be so affected. The most numerous of them were the metalsmiths, shipwrights, and tailors whose occupations depended upon importations or British shipping.¹²

There was another factor, however, to enter into the appearance of the mechanics among the Loyalists. Many were compelled by the Loyalist mechanics to sign the addresses to the victorious commanders and to declare their allegiance to Great Britain. John Wells, the printer, went about the town and forced men to affix

¹⁰ Proceedings of the Board of Police, 1780-82; Alfred Jones, editor, "The Journal of Alexander Chesney, a South Carolina Loyalist in the Revolution . . .," *Ohio State University Bulletin*, XXVI (October 30, 1921), 28; Rose died in London, aged 83, in 1805 (Lorenzo Sabine, *Biographical Sketches of Loyalists of the American Revolution* (2 vol.; Boston, 1864), II, 238).

¹¹ Ramsay, *Revolution of South Carolina*, II, 469.

¹² Ella Pettit Levitt, *Loyalism in Charleston, 1761-1784*, MS, South Caroliniana Library, pp. 22, 44; Barnet A. Elzas, *Leaves from My Historical Scrapbook* (Charleston, 1907).

their names to the addresses. Thomas Elfe, the younger cabinet-maker, later swore that the printer had circulated the documents. Elfe declared that the papers were brought to his house by Wells who informed him of its contents. Upon refusing to sign, "Wells in a most violent and threatening Manner declared that" Elfe "should be one of the first number Sent out of Town," so that Elfe "being Intimidated by such Threats and being greatly apprehensive that his refusal would be represented by . . . Wells in the most Injurious Terms and be . . . thereby removed from his Family business and Friends," added his name unwillingly to the address. Similarly, Patrick Hinds, the shoemaker, signed the same petition, for he feared Wells "(from his known Invidious disposition and resentment—towards persons attached to the Interest of America)" and for the fact that Wells "would Carry his Threats into Execution." A merchant, Edward Lightwood, later exclaimed to the South Carolina legislature: Could "you but have seen the threats and Menaces that were practiced to take in the unwary," and Robert Beard, the tinsmith, intimated that these were planned moves. He said that after signing one of these petitions, he was invited to "Loyalist meetings," but refused to attend.¹³

The Loyalists were having their day, but their policies only resulted in strife and bitterness both during the occupation and in the postwar years.

3. Persecution of the Rebels

When the town was surrendered, the inhabitants were treated as prisoners on parole under the articles of capitulation, and in a moment of British generosity, they were guaranteed security in their persons and property. Not long after this, however, the commander of the British forces required the townsmen to take an oath of allegiance to the Crown—a policy which tended to make conspicuous the most constant of Rebels. In a short time, these men became a source of suspicion and irritation to the authorities. The "d . . . d leaven," as Bull cursed them, served by their

¹³ Petitions, accounts, testimonials and other papers of Thomas Elfe, cabinet-maker, James Mackie, David Saylor, and William Cameron, coopers, Patrick Hinds, shoemaker, Robert and Elizabeth Beard, MS, S. C. Arch.

presence and example to prevent many people from submitting to the royal government. As one Rebel expressed it, "their eye was a continual reproach to the dastardly spirits" who joined the royal standard.¹⁴

These Rebels were accused of circulating rumors of American military successes against the British, particularly after the rebellious Southern forces were reorganized under Nathanael Greene. Exasperated, Balfour admitted that "For these some weeks past, both the secret and avowed adherents of rebellion have been indulging themselves in the most sanguine expectations; and by industriously propagating the most exaggerated reports of the numbers, discipline and appointment of Greene's army, particularly of Lee's cavalry, have induced many of their credulous unhappy countrymen to swerve from their allegiance and thereby involve themselves in misery and want."¹⁵

Despite British control, at times open hostility was expressed toward the conquerors. A case in point was that of Ripley Singleton, the silversmith. He and Cradock Barnwell became so contemptuous of British authority that they were confined in the Provost, the cellar under the Exchange, for a week. After expressing their contrition, they were released. Ripley Singleton's father, Tom, who was "of a lively disposition and possessed an uncommon flow of spirits" and was a "sincere friend of his country," dared to hold Rebel meetings in his home in Church Street. There he harbored patriots who stole into town by night and departed with money and precious information of British military activities.¹⁶

The old man was indiscreet, however. He had a caustic tongue and made use of it in public charges against the British. He de-

¹⁴ P. R., XXXVI, 128, 139-140; William Johnson, *Sketches of the Life and Correspondence of Nathanael Greene . . . in the War of the Revolution* (2 vol.; Charleston, 1822), I, 280.

¹⁵ *Royal Gazette*, July 21, 1781.

¹⁶ Proceedings of the Board of Police. Tom Singleton was a tobacco planter, and he supposedly introduced the cultivation of tobacco into South Carolina from Virginia upon his arrival from the latter commonwealth. Intensely interested in the culture of the plant, he wrote many pamphlets on this subject. He was also something of a shipwright. At the time of his death, in 1798, it is said, he found a means to protect the bottom of vessels from wood-eating insects (*S. C. H. G. M.*, XVII [January, 1906], 101-102). Ravenel, *Charleston: The Place and the People*, p. 304.

spised Balfour above all the officers in the British army. He kept a pet baboon, dressed in exact reproduction of the commandant's regimentals, and always addressed the animal by Balfour's name and title. When Balfour heard reports of such activities, he was not amused. He imprisoned the old man.¹⁷

Clandestine aid to the rebellion by the townsmen greatly troubled the British. In November, 1780, and again in August, 1781, Balfour announced that under the pretense of carrying on trade with the backcountry, so-called vendors removed large quantities of merchandise from town. "There is," he continued, "great reason to believe that the Rebels have been thereby supplied with many articles they were in want of." Among these were boots, shoes, saddlery, and so on. To prevent such smuggling, Balfour obliged every trader to apply for a permit to transport materials out of town, and he ordered masters of vessels to report any military stores within six hours after landing under penalty of forfeiting their ship and goods if they did not—all to no avail, however, for with the exception of arms and ammunition, it was difficult to recognize what materials were useful to the fighting Rebels.¹⁸

Probably for these reasons, the British suppression of the radicals became more severe. For example, Rebels were forbidden to commence litigation against debtors before the Board of Police. They were summoned, on the other hand, to answer charges brought against them by the Tories. Edward Weyman, the upholsterer, acting as Marshal of the Court of Admiralty in 1779, had witnessed the condemnation of a British prize vessel carrying Negroes of one of the Loyalists. The court had condemned the cargo, and Weyman had been enabled thereby to purchase some of the slaves for himself. During the occupation, their Loyalist owner complained to the Board of Police, who judged that Weyman's action had been illegal and ordered the Negroes returned to their former owner.¹⁹

More pressure was exerted on those who consistently refused to swear allegiance to the King, Cornwallis even ordering the con-

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ *G. G.*, December 30, 1780. *R. G.*, August 4, 1781, September 8, 1781.

¹⁹ *Proceedings of the Board of Police*; Ramsay, *Revolution of S. C.*, II, 119.

fiscation of their property, which was a distinct breach of the articles of capitulation. Orders were issued to forbid any concealment of/or attempts to remove any real or personal belongings. The townsmen labored under untold hardships, particularly these tradesmen who depended upon the rent from their property to supplement their wages. Rebel estates were often sold to favorites or commandeered by the authorites for use as military headquarters or residences for the friends of the British. In 1780 wagonmaster Michael Kalteisen's tenements were so badly damaged by such unwelcome occupants as General Robert Cunningham, Doctor James Clitheral, and Mr. Manson, a shipwright, that he could scarcely support himself and his family after the war.²⁰

Until 1781, the Rebels continued at their professions or trades. This situation incensed the Loyalist tradesmen who determined to end the practice and rid themselves of their competitors. House carpenters James Cook and Gilbert Chambers drew up and passed around a petition to the commandant requesting that "prisoners on parole might not be suffered to carry on their trades & Occupations to the detriment of British subjects . . . furthermore, they asserted, "that none had proper encouragement to return to their allegiance, while prisoners were permitted to remain with their families, follow their occupations, and enjoy privileges which in their opinion should be monopolized by the friends of the Royal Government."²¹

The plea was quickly answered to the satisfaction of the Loyalists as Rebels were excluded from participation in business. At this

²⁰ R. G., July 11, 28, 1781; perhaps because he worked for the Rebels in the beginning of the war, even though he is listed as a Loyalist in 1778, James Duncan's property was confiscated by the British. He claimed that he was forced to borrow money from his friends to prevent its sale. He then took the oath of allegiance in order to save his family from starvation (James Duncan Papers); Papers of Robert Beard, tinsmith, Michael Kalteisen, wagoner, John Ward, tailor, MSS, S. C. Arch.; G. G., December 16, 1780.

²¹ One Miley and James Steadman, carpenters, also circulated this petition. This claim was made by about one hundred mechanics, of various occupations, factors, and merchants, and also by John Wyatt, a Loyalist house carpenter, who in disgust told Cook that "there was business enough for every man who would work & Exert himself—." The affair had tremendous repercussions in the postwar period (papers, petitions, affidavits, reports of James Cook, carpenter, MSS, S. C. Arch.; Ramsay, *Revolution of S. C.*, II, 118, 295-296). See also Gillon's essay (*G. S. S. C.*, September 9, 1784).

point, many of the mechanics had no choice but to become "loyal" subjects, especially when the Rebels were informed by the British that they would not feed prisoners on parole. The Rebels and their families faced starvation.²²

In 1781 the British discarded the articles of capitulation in their entirety by requiring the inhabitants to defend the Crown. At this point many militiamen, prisoners on parole, quit the town in disgust and rejoined the Americans rather than be forced to fight against them. Thereupon the British announced that such an offense was punishable by death, a policy heartily recommended by printer John Wells in his *Royal Gazette*.²³

About the same time, the British continued their severity against their "Inveterate" foe. On suspicion of giving intelligence to their enemies, Jonathan Sarrazin, the silversmith, and Henry Peronneau, the radical lawyer and soldier were arrested. They were locked in the Provost where conditions had become abominable. Other radicals who would not subscribe to the oath of allegiance were imprisoned aboard two British vessels lying in the harbor. The list of prisoners on these ships almost repeats the roll of a meeting at Liberty Tree. Among them were radical planters, merchants, and mechanics. While the radicals were incarcerated, smallpox broke out among them and much suffering resulted. Death carts passed daily from the ships to the graveyards. Yet when the prisoners were threatened with death by the British for their rebellious activities and repeated refusals to swear their loyalty to England, they answered, ". . . we have only to regret that our Blood cannot be disposed of more to the advancement of the Glorious cause to which we have adher'd." ²⁴ The British fortunately did not make martyrs of them.

²² Ramsay, *Revolution of S. C.*, II, 295-296.

²³ Levitt, Loyalism in Charleston, pp. 28-30.

²⁴ Ramsay, *Revolution of S. C.*, II, 264-265. Many of the prisoners were continental soldiers. The mechanics aboard were Ralph Atmore, jeweler; William Avon, cabinet-maker; John Anthony, saddler; John Bonnoit, carpenter; John Egan, brewer; Peter Girraud, stocking weaver (Garoud); William Hornby, brewer; Nathaniel Lebby; Stephen Lee, watchmaker; George Monk, shipwright; Job Palmer, carpenter; Paul Snyder, tailor; Samuel Smith, carpenter; John Stephenson, joiner; James Toussiger, carpenter; Richard Yeadon, clock and watchmaker; Thomas You, silversmith (Weber, "Josiah Smith's Diary, 1780-1781," 204, 206, 282-284; Johnson, *Life of Greene*, I, 278).

In May, 1781, twenty-five of the leading Rebels were selected and taken to Saint Augustine on the charge that they were promoting and fomenting the "Spirit of Rebellion." Although the reason for their arrest was unproven, these men were the incendiaries of old. The group included Christopher Gadsden, Edward Weyman, William Johnson, the blacksmith, James Brown, the carpenter, George Flagg, the painter, Anthony Toomer, the builder, Peter Timothy, the printer, John Berwick, the shoemaker, and other radicals. The British probably concluded that it was unsafe to allow them any measure of freedom in Charleston.²⁵

At Saint Augustine, they were treated well—far better, in fact, than those who were locked in the prisons in Charleston. An exception was Christopher Gadsden, who was confined in a dungeon after he refused parole offered to the prisoners. He took the attitude that he had trusted the British in Charleston and accepted a parole which the British had violated when they tried to compel the Patriots to take up arms against their fellow Rebels. The other captives in Saint Augustine were allowed a certain amount of freedom in a section of the town assigned to them. They were permitted to rent their quarters, and they could purchase rations from the townspeople. They were watched closely, however. The British censored their mail, and when they were suspected of talking about the rebellion during their gatherings to worship, they were thereafter forbidden to meet alone for this purpose. However, their commander reserved a place for them in the church attended by the English and the Tories. But feeling that they would be subjected to insults, the prisoners refused the offer.²⁶

During their stay, there were only two gibes aimed at them, and both were turned to the enjoyment of the radicals. Once a carpenter, formerly of Charleston, built a gallows for them and sent them ten pumpkins—meant as an affront. But the British made the revengeful carpenter dismantle the gallows, and the prisoners ate the pumpkins. On another occasion some British revelers de-

²⁵ Weber, "Josiah Smith's Diary," XXXIII, 2-28.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 10-12.

rided and serenaded them with "Yankee Doodle." The prisoners found the spectacle and music a "Rare Shew."²⁷

Just before they were to be exchanged, they were given cause for anxiety. On orders from the commandant in Charleston, their families were summarily sent out of town, including the remaining Rebels who had refused the oath of allegiance. Among them were Daniel Cannon, the carpenter, the daughters of silversmith Sarrazin and silversmith Grimke, and the widow of blacksmith Tunis Tebout.²⁸

The prisoners of Saint Augustine reunited with their families in Jamestown and Philadelphia. There they remained until enabled to return to South Carolina where, along with other prisoners, they burned for revenge.²⁹

4. Economic Policies and Problems

The British realized that military successes alone were not enough to return the town and province to loyalty. The revival of trade, prosperity, and economic stability figured largely in their plans. Yet their unwavering adherence to mercantilism and the condition of the war itself precluded the attainment of the goal.

At first, the outlook appeared bright. In February, 1781, the harbor was full of shipping and afforded a "comfortable appearance." "No impleasing [sic] circumstance," Bull observed, "to the English Merchant as well as Carolina Planters." "Trade is very brisk and goods plenty."

He went on, "Buildings are raising out of the Ashes of that part of the Town burnt two years ago," but "not like the Phoenix with equal Beauty." Ruins hurriedly repaired and hastily constructed houses "form the present prospect of the Town," the former Lieutenant-Governor added.³⁰

²⁷ *Ibid.*, XXXIII (April, 1932), 79-116 (July, 1932), 197-207 (October, 1932), 281-289; *XXXIV* (January, 1933), 31-39 (April, 1933), 67-84 (July, 1933), 138-148 (October, 1933), 194-210.

²⁸ *Ibid.*; "Letters to General Greene," XVII, 8-11.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, XXXIV, 194-210.

³⁰ P. R., XXXVI, 104-105.

A semblance of trade had returned during the first year of the occupation, but it was hardly pleasing to two classes of the citizenry of Charleston, the American rebel merchants and the artisans, whom Bull significantly overlooked in his rosy description of economic conditions in the town. Starving for markets, British merchants flooded Carolina with their products. In these years, the province exported only £109,258:16:4 sterling while British goods imported into Carolina were valued at £637,530:14:8 sterling. Samuel Carnes, a merchant, wrote to a friend in England that "adventurers from all parts but chiefly from Scotland and Scotch houses in London have entirely engrossed the Trade and filled the place with more Goods" than could be paid for. These new merchants, he added jealously, were "Puffed up with ye present run of good luck" but the "Winding up will prove a bitter fruit to many of the New Adventurers."³¹

As quickly as possible, the British also endeavored to solve the monetary question, their policy being a return to hard money principles. In this they were successful, too successful. The inhabitants would use nothing else but gold and silver coin in transactions, and the overwhelmingly unfavorable balance of trade drove out the little amount of specie that remained in the town. One year, after the surrender of Charleston, the situation became so serious that British officials themselves wrote home and complained about the shortage of money which prevented the sale of goods.³²

Relations between debtors and creditors became greatly embittered. Creditors rapaciously pressed for payment of old debts in coined money. Mechanics of substance like Joshua Lockwood, who had previously been a friend of the Revolution, declared their allegiance to the Crown so that they might collect debts which had been owed to them since the days of inflation. Many a true Loyalist found that he was being sued by men of his own political inclinations or by some whose politics were suspiciously opportunistic.³³

³¹ Macpherson, *Annals of Commerce*, III, 673, 706, 727; Samuel Carnes to Rolleston, October 12, 1780, MS, South Caroliniana Library.

³² P. R., XXXVI, 104-105, 142; There is a proclamation making it an offense to export gold and silver coin in G. G., December 30, 1780.

³³ Proceedings of the Board of Police.

The British were consequently greatly embarrassed and confused. After nine months of quarrelling, Egerton Leigh, a Loyalist official, expressed to Lord Hillsborough the need for a law to stay the execution of debts and for complete reestablishment of civil government, though he suspected that the latter "ill corresponds with military ideas." Such desires went unfulfilled. However, late in the period, Balfour ordered the Board of Police to act only on the most necessitous cases, as "much animosity" was excited by so many suits "at a time when the united Efforts of the Community are required against the common enemy."³⁴

The authorities also hoped to relieve the distress caused by high prices for provisions, which had plagued the townsmen since 1776. Once more their efforts met with failure, for the town became increasingly more crowded. Tories from every quarter of the Province wandered into Charleston along with refugees from the war ravaged countryside. To compound distress provisions could not be obtained in any quantity. Even with their unbounded power, the frustrated British were unable to prevent the engrossing and forestalling of the supply of food on hand. The index of prices, which stood at 95 in April, 1781, rose to 195 by the following year. By April, 1782, the supply of food was so reduced that even those few who could afford extortionate rates were unable to purchase provisions.³⁵

In the beginning, the British planned to utilize the skill of the artisans for prosecuting the war since their work had been useful to the Americans in this respect. They also expected the craftsmen to fashion the implements of husbandry and a "variety of useful Articles besides, for the Estates" which the British had confiscated. Furthermore, it was believed that ship carpenters could be employed to construct vessels for transporting the products of these plantations overseas.

Such plans were impractical, however, and were never executed. In the first place, many able mechanics were imprisoned, and those

³⁴ *Ibid.*, P. R., XXXVI, 109-110.

³⁵ George Rogers Taylor, "Wholesale Commodity Prices at Charleston, South Carolina, 1732-1791," *Journal of Economic and Business History*, IV (November, 1931-August, 1932), 368; R. G., March 13, 1782; Proceedings of the Board of Police; P. R., XXXVI, 129-130; G. G., February 10, 1781.

who were working would have looked on the plan with horror since it envisioned a kind of factory system in which the proud master was to work on a par with semi-skilled labor under the supervision of a favored master artisan placed under the authority of the British. Moreover, it might be asked had the plan been pursued effectively whether the mechanics of England or Scotland would accept it? ³⁶

Evidence of discord was present, anyhow. The British were not keeping faith with the conservative artisans, they employed prisoner-mechanics on the defenses of the town in preference to Loyalist artisans, and other craftsmen were pressed into military service so their labor might be used more cheaply. Furthermore, with the high cost of living, the mechanics evidently received less for their handiwork than ever before. Loyalist shipwrights, employed by the English, received only thirteen pence in sterling, which seems to be far below any daily wage paid artisans between 1760 and 1785.³⁷

That the loyal artisans were in difficulty is apparent in the records of the Board of Police where noted proceedings are against mechanics who were unable to pay their house rent. Other entries reveal journeymen and masters at odds because of the latter's inability to pay wages. Under the circumstances, the best employer was the occupation government. Yet such jobs as were offered by the Board of Police were few. Added to this was the fact that people had small need for the wares of the craftsmen since the town was filled with these goods, and there was little money to buy their services.³⁸

Toward the end of the period, signs of a clash between some of the mechanics and the British were evident. When the British at-

³⁶ Paul Leicester Ford, editor, *Winnowings in American History: Revolutionary Narratives No. 1: Report on the Management of the Estates Sequestered in South Carolina by Order of Lord Cornwallis, in 1780-1782* by John Cruden (Brooklyn, 1890), pp. 19-20. Hereafter cited *Cruden's Report*.

³⁷ *Ibid.* The rate paid ship carpenters by the Commission for Estates between 1780 and 1782 was 6 shillings, probably in sterling. The rate stipulated in town was 13 pence probably in sterling. The rate in sterling paid artisans in the 1760's was approximately between 6 shillings and 4 shillings per day.

During the occupation real wages were low, probably because of the high prices for provisions (Appendix); Johnson, *Life of Greene*, II, 470.

³⁸ Proceedings of the Board of Police.

tempted to fix the price of meats in the markets, trouble arose with the butchers who hoped to command as high a return as possible. Likewise, differences developed with the bakers. The Board of Police maintained that they were making as high a profit as 83% on a hundredweight of flour. On the other side, a baker, one Mr. Bennie, argued that the price of flour was high and "that the Expence of Firewood, Negroes &c was much increased."³⁹

Bennie's appeals bore little weight, however. The British arbitrarily cut the profits of the bakers and set up a code for punishment of offenders. Nonetheless, the bakers refused to comply with the regulations, and on one occasion the commissioners of the market apprehended one of their number selling bread short of the prescribed weight. His loaves were seized by the commissioners, and when the luckless offender pilfered his confiscated bread, he was caught again and punished accordingly. Thereafter, penalties became more severe. The "contumacious" ones were menaced with the revocation of their oaths of allegiance, which meant eventual imprisonment or starvation. But even with this threat, order was not restored.⁴⁰

Unfortunately the hardships of the occupation fell heaviest of all on the lowest order of the working classes, the slaves who drifted into the town from the outlying plantations, many of which were deserted on account of the war. Other Negroes were held as Rebel property by the British. In order to feed the populace, the authorities set the Negroes to cultivating sequestered estates, but this project was rendered unsuccessful by the fortunes of war, and the conditions of the Negroes became generally miserable. The British possessed neither food nor medicine to care for them, and many died. To add to this problem, and as an evidence of general dissatisfaction, an "insurrection" beset the authorities on the Izard plantation near Charleston. The disorder erupted because the Negroes objected to their treatment by overseers. A party of soldiers was sent to quell the disturbance, punish the principal offenders, and take steps to prevent such behavior in the future.⁴¹

³⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴¹ *Cruden's Report*, pp. 15-17. Proceedings of the Board of Police.

As the period drew to a close, the town was in a chaotic state. The effect was that the "Friends of Government" among the mechanics were disgusted and destitute. The hopes of the "many small men" who became "so suddenly great and consequential as when the rebels bore sway" were destroyed by the lack of economic wisdom on the part of the British and by their military failures. The conservative wing of the mechanics party seemed all but destroyed; leaders like John Wells and John Rose left the state in 1782; yet the less prominent members were still destined to suffer and to struggle again for their political sins.⁴²

5. *The Reconquest of Charleston*

The success or failure of British occupation measures depended in the final analysis on military victory. After Charleston was taken, the subjugation of the state was nearly achieved. Camden was the next strategic post to fall, and Cornwallis dreamed of a triumphant campaign into Virginia through the Carolinas.

His dream was shattered, however. British and Tory atrocities in the back parts of South Carolina turned the conflict into a bloody civil war. By their shortsightedness in allowing marauders and Tory militia to plunder the countryside and by their own confiscations of property and cruelties, the British provoked partisan warfare. Under the leadership of Thomas Sumter and Francis Marion, angry Carolinians, most of whom were upcountry men, harassed, tormented, and reduced British power.⁴³

Another factor leading to the downfall of the British was the congressional appointment of Nathanael Greene to command the Southern Army. Greene never won a single battle, but he won the campaign. Every engagement bled the British a little more. Their losses were almost invariably heavy in every battle and this, added to partisan inflicted casualties, spelled the loss of South Carolina.⁴⁴

⁴² Carnes to Rolleston, October 12, 1780; Jones, "Journal of Alexander Chesney," XXVI, 27.

⁴³ Wallace, *Appeal to Arms*, p. 271; Christopher Ward, *The War of the Revolution* (2 vol.; New York, 1952), II, 706, 722-736, 737-738, 762, 770-771, 776.

⁴⁴ Wallace, *Appeal to Arms*, p. 245; Ward, *War of the Revolution*, II, 778, 784-794, 795-801, 808.

After the battle of Eutaw Springs, the British withdrew to Charleston. By the spring of 1782, the patriots commanded the rivers and controlled the access of food into the city. On August 7, 1782, after the seaport was hemmed in landwise, the British decided to leave.⁴⁵



A regular tobacco manufactory
opened by
IMANUEL CORTISOZ,
from LONDON

The actual evacuation did not take place until December, but in the interval, the "New Adventurers," who had arrived in 1780 with their multiplicity of goods, faced the bitter "Winding Up," that is, bankruptcy. Debts were still owing to them and large quantities of their goods remained unsold. Recognizing their predicament, the authorities enabled them to negotiate with the Governor, and the English merchants obtained permission to remain in town for a period of eighteen months after the evacuation in order to conclude their affairs.⁴⁶

On December 14, Charleston was finally freed. As the British marched out to board their vessels from Gadsden's wharf, the Americans entered triumphantly. At that moment, as Dr. David Ramsay describes the scene, "cheerfulness and good humor took possession of minds that, during seven years, had been continually occupied with anxiety and distress."⁴⁷ But "cheerfulness" and "good humor" were, in the aftermath of the events of the British occupation, short-lived.

⁴⁵ Ward, *War of the Revolution*, II, 809-834, 837-838, 840-841, 842-844; Wallace, *History of South Carolina*, II, 287-291, 296-299, 307.

⁴⁶ Joseph W. Barnwell, "The Evacuation of Charleston," *S. C. H. G. M.*, XI (January, 1910), 1-26; Ramsay, *Revolution of S. C.*, II, 371-372.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, II, 385. See also, for this section; Alden, *The South in the Revolution*.

V

RESULTS OF REVOLUTION

Violence and anti-aristocratic sentiment rocked Charleston in the wake of the Revolution and British occupation. The mechanics and their new allies, the rebel merchants under the leadership of Alexander Gillon, united to wreak vengeance on loyalists and press for measures to encourage trade and fulfill revolutionary aims. The Confederation period witnessed the continuation of the revolutionary movement in Charleston.

1. Postwar Boom

In 1783 the state was hardly at peace. Old and new problems, growing out of the Revolution, presented themselves for solution. Nowhere were they so intense as in Charleston where once again social and economic forces caused the eruption of strife and tumult.

At the end of the war business was promising. The people rushed to buy goods which had been scarce during the conflict but were again available to them in abundance. In 1783 the value of imports of British goods exceeded £226,000 sterling, and these, with the residue of unsold wares from the days of the occupation, created a consumer's market. In 1783 and 1784 prices had fallen generally below the level of 1781.¹

Signs of a boom were present in the building trades. Townsmen and the residents of the neighboring area were replacing the ruins of the fire of 1778 and the devastations of the war with new structures. Advertisements for housewrights to plan and build town

¹ Macpherson, *Annals of Commerce*, IV, 40.

and country houses, to rebuild bridges, and to construct public buildings were numerous. Bricklayers, brickmakers, painters, plasterers, carvers, and similar tradesmen were badly needed.²

What was beneficial for one class was injurious for another. With the unusual demand for builders, their wages rose accordingly, but employers, most of whom were planters, felt that they could not afford the excessive rates. The agriculturists especially were in difficulties. Widespread destruction of their implements of production and displacement of their labor force between 1780 and 1782 brought hardships. The fact that South Carolina exported a little more than £74,000 sterling of its produce to England in 1783 was also indicative of their low economic circumstances.³

A clash between the mechanics and the planters was almost inevitable; words were hurled back and forth in the newspapers in the latter part of 1783. Speaking for the planters, one who called himself "Another Patriot" demanded first that wages like the prices of necessities ought to be regulated by law. "Tis injustice," he wrote, "to leave to individuals actuated perhaps alone by avarice" to command their own price for those things which were essential to the comfort and wellbeing of people. Next, "Another Patriot" proposed that carpenters, bricklayers, brickmakers, and other artisans be brought in from the northern states or Europe, especially Scotland.⁴

The second idea infuriated the mechanics. It threatened a surplus of labor, competition for employment, and a consequent reduction in earnings. One answered feelingly that no northern craftsman had ever enriched himself in Carolina and that "Another Patriot's" invitation to them would earn him the name of "liar." Referring to the European workmen, another craftsman mentioned the explosive postwar issue: "Do write for them from Holland, France, England" and Scotland "may-be some of those will come

² *G. A.*, March 27, April 24, May 20, June 24, October 19, 1784.

³ Macpherson, *Annals of Commerce*, IV, 40; Ramsay, *History of South Carolina*, II, 428.

⁴ *G. A.*, October 18, 25, November 4, 1783.

and possibly you may get some of YOUR FRIENDS from ST. AUGUSTINE, [the Loyalists] who know the city better than foreigners.”⁵

Concerning wages, a master carpenter compared the turn of events of 1783 with the days of “Speculation and Monopoly.” Then the carpenter complained there was no need for “newspaper patriots.” Then, “the artisans were the only sufferers, and those that cou’d would not be Patriotic in their favour . . . I’ll tell you, Sir, in 1779 I had and still have, (thank God) a wife and several small children”; “many a live-long summer’s day have I wrought, from the rising, to the setting sun, and when my wages were collected, could not with each day’s WHOLE wages, purchase one yard of very coarse linen, to cloathe my children.”⁶

On “debtor buying” in 1779, he recalled, “sometimes” I was “kept out of my money, three or four months, and by this time” I “could not purchase one quarter of a yard of the same cloth with my money . . . Sir, this is a fact, that can be attested to by many . . . Houses were built and repaired for little more than nothing; these were glorious times, the Artificers, had no enemies then, because they had nothing to be envied; but now, because there is a little reverse of fortune, (and very little God help us) every fellow that is an artizan, must be a villain, an extortioner, and deserves to be punished by laws.”

The quarrel over high wages broadened to embrace long-standing grievances of mechanics against their old friends and pre-revolutionary allies, the planters who were attacked as their debtors. Abandoning their former unity with the agrarians and united once by the common desire for cheap money, the mechanics adopted the hard-money stand of the merchants, accusing the planters of taking advantage of the inflationary period between 1778 and 1780, practicing “debtor buying,” and then raising and exacting high prices for provisions, which on the one hand robbed the mechanic of a just profit and on the other starved him.

Always a sore spot, the question of the use of slave artisans by the planter came under fire openly for the first time in this period.

⁵ *G. G.*, November 1, 1783.

⁶ *Ibid.*

The planter was fiercely criticized for attempting to drive the artisan out of his living with cheap Negro labor.

As the mechanics and merchants viewed it, one critical housewright pointed out the means by which the aristocratic planter was created. Many, "came into this country from thirty to fifty years" ago, emigrated "from the lowest classes of mankind in Europe . . ." and "their indigence" was "such, as made it difficult for them to procure an Overseers place; these persons fortunately 'turned their thoughts to planting and' [met] 'with great indulgences, from the Merchant who, if their crop failed the first year, would wait a second and a third, for the payment of those goods, which they had supplied them with.' The planter enriched himself by exacting high prices for provisions and consequently became possessed of "from three hundred to fifteen hundred negroes these ten to twenty years past."⁷

The aristocrat trod on the artisan with his "extremely bad pay." He "frequently made it his practice to build his house, and furnish it, and even to cloathe himself, on credit with the tradesman, and leave his account unpaid for years, and thereby disable the master workman from procuring hands since" the indigent workman preferred to stay in a country where he could get his hire every Saturday night. Nor was this all: "Those planters went farther, and made it a practice to purchase new negroes with the money due the tradesman."⁸

The mechanics did not mince words in the dispute with the planters. Withering sarcasm was a potent weapon:

We as a people wish to know, to what this will lead, whether you think the great Creator of the Universe made the mines of Peru only for the tillers of the earth, or whether you mean to purchase us as Pharoah did the Egyptians during the seven years of famine, for the support of a miserable life; or whether you mean to be more modest, and only put

⁷ *G. A.*, November 4, 1783. An indication that the mechanics had changed position is the number of cases concerning indebtedness in which the mechanics were involved during the occupation, 40% of the artisans initiating such suits. In the 1760's the number of suits for debt brought forward by the mechanics was negligible (*Proceedings of the Board of Police; Records of the Court of Common Pleas, 1777-1785*).

⁸ *Ibid.*

us on a level with the unfortunate peasants of the free Republic of Poland, to work three days of each week for our lords the planters.⁹

Such was, in part, the economic background of the political turmoil of the postwar era. The mechanics had altered their position and, at the end of the Revolution, could see eye to eye with the merchants. Their new allies were not the old Tory group, whom they still despised, but rather those who sought to displace the "old leaven," those who, like the craftsmen, had "that hungry look." Ambition made for compatible political bedfellows.

2. Aristocracy versus Democracy

In January, 1782, the legislature convened in Jacksonborough, a small community near occupied Charleston. Never before or since, claimed McCrady writing in 1902, had there met "a more distinguished body of men." The assembly was filled with former prisoners of war, soldiers, and patriots. The instructions for holding the election precluded any other kind of body. Counted among the luminaries were the mechanic leaders: Edward Weyman, Anthony Toomer, the housewright become a colonel, George Flagg, Daniel Cannon, William Johnson, and John Berwick, who was elected clerk.

Chiefly motivated by revenge and the hope of paying, at least in part, the cost of the war, the legislature passed two important and controversial acts which were to set the state ablaze for the next three years. More than two hundred eighty-six names were chosen chiefly from "known" Loyalists or from various congratulatory addressers to Clinton or Cornwallis upon their military victories at Charleston and Camden. Included also were those who had sworn allegiance to the British or taken up arms against the revolutionaries. The selection was at best arbitrary and discriminatory. The state abounded in Loyalists to the extent that, after 1780, the war took on all the viciousness of a civil war as well as a fight against a foreign invader. Nonetheless those selected were punished by banishment and confiscation or by an amercement of

⁹ *Ibid.*

their property. Penalties were exacted punitively without recourse to trial. The weight of the acts fell mainly on the inhabitants of Charleston and the low country.

Christopher Gadsden, leading a small minority, waged the greatest and most heroic fight of his life against the acts, pointing out their crass injustice. As he later wrote to General Marion about the Confiscation Act, "It has haunted me,"¹⁰ and

I fought it through, inch by inch, as unjust, impolitic, cruel, premature, oppressing numbers of innocent for one man supposed to be guilty, formerly signing a paper, when visibly under power and restraint of a known cruel oppressive and tyrannical enemy; and I insisted, over and over again, besides, that the Bill was manifestly calculated to defeat and destroy the very intention of those who were its most sanguine favorers, with regard to any emolument, they expect the public to derive therefrom; and it was like a man exhausting himself and beating about him with the greatest fury and rage, thoughtless and regardless of what friends he must unavoidably hurt, or of the numberless advantages he gave his enemy over him. I prest it again and again, only to defer it till we got possession of Charles Town, . . . and reminded them of the proverb not to sell the bear-skin before they had catched the bear; but all to no purpose; and when the bill came to the last definitive passing I then told the House, holding up both my hands, that before I would give my vote for such a Bill I would suffer them to be cut off.

His pleas fell on deaf and unwilling ears and served only further to anathematize him with the vindictives. But the old revolutionary was not without influence, having been offered the governorship which he declined on account of age and infirmities, at the meeting of the assembly. He succeeded in ameliorating some of the legislature's severity, managing to write the twentieth clause and the twenty-eighth article of the Confiscation Act, for which he was regarded as a counter-revolutionary.

¹⁰ Gadsden to Francis Marion, November 17, 1782, Bancroft Collection, New York Public Library.

Judge Aedanus Burke, a member of the house who sided with Gadsden, under the pseudonym of "Cassius," also protested against these anti-Tory acts. They were dictated by prejudice and favoritism. Several aristocrats who had behaved disloyally during the war but who had friends in the legislature were not listed in them. During the past seven years, there had developed in South Carolina a party of aristocrats bent on destroying the democracy of the state.¹¹

Burke's writings and Gadsden's stand were explosive. Within the next two years, the legislature became more merciful, realizing, as Burke and Gadsden claimed, that many men who had accepted British protection and allegiance had done so under the duress of starvation or imprisonment. Nevertheless, every move of the legislature permitting an exile to return to the state or removing one from the list of confiscation or amercement was viewed by the mechanics of Charleston with a jaundiced eye. Every sign of moderation was looked upon thereafter as the work of corrupt aristocrats.¹²

Adding fuel to the flames was the fact that the "New Adventurers" were still in town in accordance with the agreement of 1782 and the subsequent Anglo-American Treaty of Peace. The "Inhabitants of this State" led by the Charleston merchant, William Logan, complained to the Senate that the "New Adventurers" were monopolizing trade and "creating Artificial Scarcities of the most Necessary articles," and daily creating new modes of operations which were detrimental to the "Community." They urged their removal to England. Later, similar cries were raised by a "Meeting of the Inhabitants of Charleston" over which mechanic Edward Weyman presided.¹³

The parties of the town, as in the past, acted according to what they thought to be their best interests. The planters, generally

¹¹ Cassius, *An Address to the Freemen of South Carolina . . .* (Philadelphia, 1783), pp. 10-11, 14, 16, 24. Burke also said that despite the British prohibitions, townsmen sent supplies into the country to aid the rebellion.

¹² Ramsay, *Revolution of S. C.*, II, 387.

¹³ G. S. S. C., July 21, 1783; G. A., July 10, 1783; Journal of the Senate of South Carolina, 1783, MS, S. C. Arch., pp. 56-57, January 20, 1783.

accused of corruption and leniency toward the British and the Tories, earned the sobriquets, "Aristocrats" or "Nabobs." As in 1774, during the debate over non-exportation of rice, they knew well their best customers were the British. Opposed to them were the men of trade: the mechanics, the merchants, and their insurgent young lawyers, essentially the same group which had united to oppose Lowndes' proclamation in 1778.

The motives of the merchants' agitation against the Tories and the "New Adventurers" were clearly shown by their jealousy of and desire to replace the British merchants who handled the bulk of the trade with England. They strongly hoped to usurp this trade for themselves and to direct it into new channels, that is, to revive the Revolutionary commerce with France and Holland, who had been America's allies. The operations of the Tory merchants in the city caused "ruinous competition" for them.

The mechanics joined in this struggle for their own reasons. Long suffering from the competition of English artisans, they found that independence had not favored them with a larger home market. Instead, as of old, British wares ordered during the occupation by the "New Adventurers" and more recently by the Tory merchants, flooded Charleston. Driven out of business by conservative mechanics in 1781 and weakened financially by the days of "Speculation and Monopoly," they thought with dismay that an aristocratic party had been formed which was coddling their inveterate enemies and, by the threat of fixing the price of labor, denying the patriots the chance to regain their losses of the war years. They felt menaced by aristocrats who would return essentially to the old order and rob them of the fruit of their labors and suffering in the "grand old cause."

The anti-aristocratic party organized well. Almost immediately after the Revolution, Alexander Gillon, a sea captain and merchant, and James Fallon, a little-known figure from Georgia, reformed a Charleston "Smoking-Society," supposedly of a convivial nature, and renamed it the Marine Anti-Britannic Society.

The president was Alexander Gillon. Before the outbreak of the war he had evidently not been in sympathy with the revolu-

tionary movement. Upon one occasion, he had been called to account by the Committee on the enforcement of the non-importation agreement and made to apologize for having imported British goods. But with the outbreak of the war, he was among those who supported and participated in the new commerce with France, the French West Indies, and Holland. He was himself a native from the latter nation. His influence rose with the Revolution. He was commissioned commander of the South Carolina Navy and sent to Europe both to outfit ships and to procure supplies at the state's expense. It was an ill-starred mission. Some supplies were secured and three ships built and outfitted. One took part in the naval action in the West Indies but another, attacking the Island of Jersey, absorbed a terrible beating which rendered it incapable of further action. The Gillon mission was almost a total failure, and he was under criticism by the legislature when named president of the Marine Anti-Britannic Society. Gadsden, being his leading antagonist, referred to the affair as the "wretched bargain."

Gillon was filled with bitterness over these attacks and the fact that his Charleston estate had been confiscated by the British increased his rancor against Tories. He easily became the leader of the anti-Tory and merchant-mechanic faction. In the face of legislative opposition he must have been gratified with the support and political power which they gave him. Like his new merchant followers, he desired to broaden trade. Trade with Holland, for example, should prove lucrative to him. He was accused of furthering his own interests in his homeland while on the naval mission, an accusation which from common sense has an aura of truth about it. The demagogue's mantle fell lightly on Gillon's shoulders.¹⁴

No roll of the membership of the society is extant but some of its officers are known. They were Benjamin Huggins, an attorney and dealer in real estate; Sims White, a factor, who had been confined on a British prison ship and was later an attorney and

¹⁴ *G. S. S. C.*, December 4, 1783, April 22, 29, May 6, 13, 20, August 19, September 16, 1784, contain the rules of the society; U. B. Phillips, "The South Carolina Federalists," *American Historical Review*, XIV (July, 1909), 529-543. McCrady, *South Carolina in the Revolution*, 1780-1783, p. 162.

director of the Bank of South Carolina; Benjamin Cudworth, a prisoner of Saint Augustine and a politician; Thomas Russel, a continental soldier from New York; William H. Torrans, a young attorney; and Henry Peronneau, a lawyer and rioter in 1778.¹⁵

Most of the inflammatory literature aimed at the Tories and the British came from the Society. Gillon engaged in a fiery newspaper duel with Christopher Gadsden over the persecution of the Tories and the condemnation of the "New Adventurers" and the aristocrats. Gadsden spoke for the Nabobs at this time. Polemics and handbills were hurled against the Tories, one of which received wide notoriety. It was "Some Salutary Hints Pointing out the Policy and Consequences of Admitting British Subjects to Engross Our Trade and Become Our Citizens" and addressed to those "Who risqued or lost their all to bring about the Revolution."¹⁶

The program of the society was designed primarily to attract Whig merchants and the mechanics. At its anniversary meeting in 1783, toasts were drunk to a "rise in trade" over England, the "*natural foe*," and a speedy restoration of the Chamber of Commerce, solely consisting of "true American Merchants, patriotic Planters and true Whig-subjects of our Allies." Other toasts were: "May the leaven of Aristocracy never enjoy a place in America"; "May the public servants of this State always *represent* and never *misrepresent* their Constituents"; and "May the cruelties and Manufactures of Great Britain be equally despised by every American."¹⁷

Two mechanic clubs added the weight of their influence to the workings of the Marine Anti-Britannic Society. They were the Palmetto Society which began in 1777, and the Carpenters Society which was formed in 1783. These organizations were led by the men of the Liberty Tree and by former members of the Fellowship Society and the John Wilkes Club: Edward Weyman, upholsterer, George Flagg, painter, William Johnson, blacksmith, and

¹⁵ *Ibid.*; *S. C. H. G. M.*, XXVIII (October, 1927), 223; I (April, 1900), 176; VII (October, 1906), 220, 223; XXXIII (April, 1932), 100, 112, 115, 284; XXIV (April, 1933), 79; XL (January, 1919), 145; XXV (October, 1924), 182.

¹⁶ *Charleston Evening Gazette*, September 27, 1785.

¹⁷ *G. A.*, December 16, 1783.

Alexander Alexander, the radical schoolmaster. The "Enemies of Government," as Clinton had once listed them, were still "parading" non-subscribers, holding "Meetings of the Inhabitants," in order to rail against the British merchants, distributing stirring handbills, and persecuting the Tories.¹⁸

The result of the agitation of the American merchants and the mechanics against the planter aristocracy was riot and confusion. Throughout 1783 the mob was again turned loose and vicious attacks were made on the Tories. Some were "pumped," tarred, and feathered, or threatened with worse violence. Sometimes Rebels and Tories battled in the streets, as for instance, on the evening of July 11, 1783, when the worst of these frays took place. It seemed that a certain British subject "imprudently and grossly" insulted a Whig citizen of the town and occasioned tumult between "irregular assemblages of peoples" who had been meeting on the two previous evenings.

The government became alarmed, especially since such outbreaks were accompanied by cries against the aristocratic legislature. Steps were taken to prevent further disorders. The governor and the Privy Council issued a proclamation calling upon the peace officers and good citizens of the state to keep the peace.¹⁹

A more effective device was employed by the legislature on August 13, 1783, in the incorporation of Charleston, which significantly had been desired by the mechanics since 1765. The law, which provided for an intendant and thirteen councilmen, stated that in case of rioting, the city officials should be summoned to take preventive measures.²⁰

In the first election, which was held in the fall of 1783, the influential George Flagg, painter, and Bernard Beeckman, block-maker, were placed on the City Council. Other mechanics of importance like William Johnson, blacksmith, and Daniel Cannon, carpenter, held posts at the pleasure of the Council. As city fathers, it was the duty of some of the most radical artisans to halt rioting

¹⁸ *G. S. S. C.*, May 12, 1777; July 21, October 8, 1783; May 13, 1784; *W. G.*, July 5, September 20, 1783; *P. A.*, June 2, 1784.

¹⁹ Phillips, "S. C. Federalists," 533.

²⁰ Cooper, *Statutes*, VII, 97-101.

in any way possible, but failing in this, they could be fined as much as £200 sterling for malpractices in office.²¹

Disturbances of the peace did not cease, however. Joseph Johnson, in his *Reminiscences*, relates a story which seems typical of the scenes. One day Gillon, finding himself followed by two Tory toughs whose object appeared to be mayhem, found sanctuary in the protection of William Johnson. The sight of the sturdy blacksmith, stick in hand, intending a vigorous defense of the politico, caused hasty retreat and Johnson "convoyed the commadore into port." When it was heard that the legislature permitted the return of carpenters James Cook and Gilbert Chambers who had circulated the petition to prevent Rebel tradesmen from working during the occupation, the mechanics fairly exploded in their indignation against the legislature. James Cook was never permitted to return to the state as a result, but Chambers was allowed to continue his residence in Charleston. Chambers was then threatened and his house attacked by a mob of disguised men. His family was terrified and he announced that he intended to leave the state.²²

In 1784 the radicals redoubled their efforts to force the Tories to leave, and many "Friends of Government" quit the state. Someone who claimed to have been "represented" by the Marine Anti-Britannic Society and "pumped" by the mob published "The Tory's Soliloquy" describing his plight:

to go . . . or not to go
 . . . or stay among the Rebels!
And, by our stay, rouse up their keenest rage . . .
Hard choice! —Stay let me think.—T'explore our way
 Thro raging seas, to Scotia's rocky coast,
At this dire season of a direful year . . .
Or stay and cringe to the rude surly [whigs],
 Whose wounds, yet fresh, may urge their desperate hand
To spurn us while we sue; — perhaps consign us

²¹ *Ibid.*; *G. S. S. C.*, September 17, 1783; April 15, November 25, December 6, 1784; *W. G.*, April 26, 1783.

²² James Cook, carpenter and Gilbert Chambers, carpenter, petitions, accounts, testimonies, and other papers. *G. A.*, July 1, 1784. Johnson, *Reminiscences*, p. 400-401.

To the *kind care* of some outrageous mob,
Who for their sport, our persons may adorn
In all the majesty of *tar and feathers*;
Or, placed beneath the *pumps* disgorging *spout*,
Receive its cold ablution, for *our Sins*:
Or, worse, our necks, to keep their humour warm
May grace a Rebel halter . . .
. . . for who can brook a Rebel's frown? — or
 bear his children's stare
When in the streets they point, and lisp,
 '*A Tory*'
. . . or worse, far worse,
To tempt the deep-laid projects of a *Club*
Known by the name of ANTI-BRITANNIC . . .²³

In March, 1784, another embroilment arose out of an argument between one Captain William Thompson, a tavern-keeper, and John Rutledge. It seems that Rutledge was invited to dine with the Sons of Saint Patrick on March 17. He gave Thompson a verbal message that he would be unable to attend the dinner but Thompson did not pass this on to the Society. Thereupon, Rutledge requested the captain to visit him to explain why he had not delivered his communication in person or at least "Suffer his Servant to deliver his Message." Thinking that he had been called to account by Rutledge, Thompson went angrily to his house where the two men exchanged heated words. Later, Thompson demanded that Rutledge apologize for treating him as a "haughty Lordling" would use a "wretched vassal."

The House of Representatives "investigated" the matter upon Rutledge's request. It was ordered that Thompson be taken into custody "for a gross insult on and undeserved injury to an Honorable member of the House and also for a flagrant violation and breach of the privileges thereof." When Thompson asked for a hearing and the right of attorney to determine in what way he had broken the privileges of that body, the House answered that it alone judged what were and what were not its prerogatives.

²³ *Ibid.*, April 29, 1784; *G. S. S. C.*, January 8, 1784.

The innkeeper was later freed after posting a £1000 bond guaranteeing his good behavior in the future. He immediately sent his version of the episode to the press and venomously attacked the aristocracy.²⁴

The Marine Anti-Britannic Society seized upon this dispute as additional evidence of the machinations of the aristocracy. The Society issued a resolution tendering its thanks to Thompson for his "manly and patriotic" conduct in the dispute, but John Miller, the official printer of the state, refused to publish the pronouncement in his *gazette*. As a result, the Society voted unanimously that their members withdraw their advertisements from Miller's columns "*for ever*" and patronize only the papers of Nathan Childs and Mrs. Ann Timothy.²⁵

Renewed mobbing was expected momentarily. On April 30, Intendant Richard Hutson and the City Council commanded that in the event of disturbance the bells of St. Michaels be rung to summon to the State House all the "well ordered and peaceable citizens" in support of the law. But as was soon proved at this point there were few, if any, possessing these calm qualities. Hutson and the Council really marshalled the Anti-Britannic opposition, for until now only the mechanics and anti-Tory element had been on the offensive while the Nabobs stood by. The Nabobs' pent up ire could be given the color of legality in assisting the magistrates. The ordinance was therefore an invitation to a general fray.²⁶

Rioting again exploded in July soon after the spirited celebrations of independence. Timothy's paper claimed that trouble began when a band of innocent, frolicking apprentices were attacked. St. Michaels bells pealed, and street battles ensued between the magistracy with their supporters, the Aristocrats, against the Marine Anti-Britannics and mechanics, the Democrats. Horsemen rode recklessly through the streets. Henry Perroneau, an Anti-Britannic, alleged that Col. Horry leading a mounted band picked on the

²⁴ *Ibid.*, April 29, 1784; J. H. R., 1784, pp. 329-333, March 20, 1784.

²⁵ G. S. S. C., April 1, 8, 1784.

²⁶ S. J., 1784, p. 335, March 18, 1784. Legislative System File, Proclamation of the Governor and Message to the Senate, March 13, 1784, MSS, S. C. Arch. P. A., May 5, 1784.

Whigs. Heated accusations filled the gazettes. Duels were threatened, one which found Horry challenging, Perroneau declining. The Democrats accused the magistracy of senseless and provocative behavior bringing on terror. For more than a month, Charleston continually existed in such hot-headed confusion.²⁷

The great test of strength came finally in September. Alexander Gillon and the incumbent Richard Hutson announced their candidacy for Intendant. A brief campaign took place in which the electors were urged to vote for the Democracy against the Aristocracy. All voters, even Tories, were permitted to participate in the election. The results favored Richard Hutson, 387 to 127, a margin of more than three to one.²⁸

Gillon was taunted at the defeat and undoubtedly lost prestige. There are reasons to believe that many of the mechanics had deserted Gillon by the time of the election, certainly it was the case afterward. John Miller, the printer, claimed that Gillon's Marine Anti-Britannic Society had lost its influence and that many people had left it. Even after its members had resolved against patronizing Miller's paper, some mechanics continued to advertise in his *South Carolina Gazette and General Advertiser* between April and September, 1784. The most prominent leaders of the artisans' party were themselves officers of the city government, and so, they were duty-bound to oppose riots. That some master mechanics, at least, declined force as a matter of policy is evident in the rules of the Master Barbers Society founded in 1786. Should any member "wilfully engage in Riots or quarrels, upon proof thereof before a Majority of two thirds of the whole [membership] he shall be excluded for ever . . ."²⁹

The defeat emphasized the split which had been long developing in the mechanics' party. The conservative artisans cast their ballots in this election and were given added strength by property-owning mechanics who had taken protection from the British either

²⁷ Some Tories were accused of setting fire to the store houses of Jersey and Walters, Whig merchants, in April (*G. S. S. C.*, April 22, July 1, 8, 15, 17, 29, August 2, 9; *P. A.*, July 10, 1784; September 3, 1785).

²⁸ *G. A.*, September 14, 1784.

²⁹ *G. A.*, May 11, 1784; Rules of the Barbers Society, MS. S. C. Arch.

because they then desired payment of their debts or because they faced starvation during the occupation of Charleston. They were certainly not unsympathetic toward the Revolution. They were undeservedly and mistakenly designated as Tories, and undoubtedly hoped to end their persecution.³⁰

Credit must also be given to the "Nabobs" for skillful political management. In permitting the Tories to vote, they apparently increased the number of the electors by more than 50% over the previous year. The Tories inclined toward the "Nabobs." Besides, in incorporating the city, they helped greatly to divide the radicals, and by having Gadsden lead their counter-attacks in the press, they doubtless added supporters of orderly government and afforded Gadsden, the "Steady and Open Republican," a measure of revenge against the men who broke him in 1778.³¹

There were as usual a few embittered diehards. In October, the reelected intendant reported that a number of people were still riding "in the style and manner of madmen, or drunken savages" through the city. In November, a writer in the *Columbian Herald* stated that the electorate of the poor and middling should vote against "a few ambitious, avaricious, and designing families" who might "wriggle themselves into power and influence." Another

³⁰ Such property owning mechanics as Lockwood, Cannon, and Pritchard took protection at the beginning of the occupation to recover debts owing them since early in the Revolution. Cannon's and Pritchard's sympathies certainly lay with the rebellion, both being prominent members of the mechanics party. The two were later persecuted by the British. Pritchard suffered imprisonment while Cannon was exiled (Proceedings of the Board of Police).

Another example is that of David Bruce, the printer. In 1778, Bruce was requested by Laurens and Gadsden to publish *Common Sense* to form a more favorable opinion of independence among the conservatives. Bruce willingly printed the pamphlet which, as he said, "had the desired effect." But he was forced to take protection during the occupation or starve. He was designated a loyalist and underwent amercement of his property after the state was recovered by the Carolinians. Evidently, he was no loyalist (Papers of David Bruce, S. C. Arch.).

Cases similar to Cannon's, Pritchard's, Lockwood's, and Bruce's were numerous. They can be found in the papers of the following mechanics: Benjamin Baker, carpenter, James Duncan, blacksmith, James Askew, watchmaker, Mary and Robert Beard, tinsmith, Samuel Bonsall, gunsmith, Thomas Elfe, Jr., cabinetmaker, Patrick Hinds, shoemaker, Andrew Reid, ropemaker, David Saylor, cooper, John Ward, tailor, MSS in the S. C. Arch.

See also, for a further description of the conditions of the occupation, "Letters of Ralph Izard," S. C. H. G. M., II (April, 1901), 195.

³¹ In 1783, 241 people voted, in 1784, 514 voted (G. S. S. C., September 17, 1783; G. A., September 14, 1784).

related the story of the "Cobbler of Messina" who had conducted a single-handed campaign to cleanse his government of corruption. But the people of Charleston and their "coblles" saw no need for similar action.³²

The government with its aristocratic leadership, visibly shaken by the violence of 1783 and 1784, made concessions. On March 17, 1785, the governor notified all those persons who had been exiled from sister states and had taken refuge in South Carolina to leave within the month and that all persons who had been banished and had returned to the state might stay but three months longer. This action ended much of the anti-Loyalist agitation.³³ Within the next few years the government substantially met the demands of the mechanics to encourage their manufacturing. It permitted the incorporation of their societies and even attempted the regulation of slave-mechanic labor. No aristocratic official was so foolhardy as again to suggest setting the wages of labor, though the city in 1786, dared to limit the price of bread which so enraged the bakers that they went on strike.

The economic depression which, after 1785, settled over the state like a pall gave a kind of unity in misery to the three revolutionary groups of the town. Merchants and mechanics agreed, grudgingly but without violence, in a program to broaden trade, seek new money crops, and inflate the currency, and the planters eventually gave their approval.

Peace reigned in the city for the first time in decades. Significantly, the Marine Anti-Britannic Society changed its name to the South Carolina Marine Society and then all but disappeared, until 1806, when a group of the citizenry, in order to aid commerce and raise a fund for impoverished seamen, petitioned the Legislature for incorporation. The leaders of the Marine Anti-Britannic Society of 1783-1784 were rewarded, however, with some success as politicians and men of business in later years. Moreover, *The General Advertiser* captured the new quiescent spirit. One of its essayists summed up public opinion when he claimed that he was willing

³² *G. A.*, October 2, 1784; November 26, 1784. *P. A.*, October 11, 1785.

³³ Phillips, "S. C. Federalists," 537.

to forgive the "crimes" of the Tories and added that he, as one inhabitant, was glad to welcome home a reprieved friend from his banishment.³⁴

3. Encouragement to Manufacturing

Amid the planned tumults and confusion of 1783 and 1784, which served to hammer home and give force to their objectives, the mechanics' representatives labored to satisfy their constituents. The "aristocracy" hastened to placate and cooperate. For the mechanics, attainment of their own assemblymen was a fruitful outcome of the Revolution.

The most sticky and perennial problem was that of Negro labor. It may be recalled that the artisans had been instrumental in prohibiting the importation of Negroes in 1770, during the quarrel with Great Britain over the Townshend Act, and that the extensive importations of black labor had occasioned much discontent on the eve of the revolution. Probably, one of the salient reasons for this action of the mechanics was to win the support of their white laborers. But Negro slave labor still remained to plague the mechanics.

However the artisans themselves greatly valued slave labor and during the entire course of this period used slavery to the utmost advantage, in training Negroes as handcraftsmen for sale eventually to the planters, in hiring-out their blacks for profit, and in utilizing the labor of enslaved craftsmen as legacies to provide for the members of deceased artisans' families.

They were, in part, the cause of their own trouble, yet the artisans were annoyed by townsmen and planters who hired out their slaves to perform jobs in competition with the white craftsmen. Sometimes unemployed on this account, the unpropertied craftsmen bitterly disliked the system. It is noteworthy that manufacturing craftsmen, the saddlers, cabinetmakers, coachmakers, and silversmiths, for example, never complained about Negro labor. Lamentations came from other trades. There is thus evi-

³⁴ C. H., February 24, 1785; G. A., September 14, 1784; Petition for Incorporation of South Carolina Marine Society. MS, Society Records File, S. C. Arch.

dence to indicate that the party was never completely of one mind on this subject except when it could be raised to bring on revolution.

Two groups of tradesmen, the builders and the coopers, seemed to have suffered most. The carpenters and bricklayers petitioned the House of Representatives and the Senate in 1783 that they had labored under "many Inconveniences Since the commencement of the . . . War, having Scarce had employ Sufficient to Support their families, owing to the number of Jobbing Negro Tradesmen, who undertook work for little more than the Stuff would Cost," by which it appeared they could not "come honestly by the Stuff they worked with."³⁵

Alexander Gillon sought redress of their grievances. The committee which handled this petition in the House was composed of Mr. Savage, George Flagg, the painter, and Anthony Toomer, the housewright. The Senate committee on the mechanics' petition was made up of Jonathan Sarrazin, the silversmith, Joseph Atkinson, probably the tallow chandler, and Dr. Oliphant, who may have been related to David Oliphant, the painter.³⁶

Their report embodied the mechanics' desires. It was designed to give them a greater volume of employment and a share in some of the profits arising from the hiring-out of slave artisans. It recommended that an ordinance be passed to prohibit any Negro from working "at any Mechanical Occupation except under the direction of some white Mechanic." Should any person disobey the proposed act, he would be fined "for every hour during which the negro shall be employed" and the penalties of the act would redound to "the sole benefit of the informer." However, any mechanic could employ his Negroes "in doing any Necessary private work or business of [his] own" without incurring penalties.³⁷

The answer of the legislature fell far short of the committee's recommendations. The lawmakers merely revived an old act of 1740 permitting slave owners to hire out slaves as long as they gave their Negroes permission in writing. Nothing more was

³⁵ *S. J.*, 1783, p. 189, February 22, 1783.

³⁶ *Ibid.* Committee Book, 1782-1783, MS, S. C. Arch.

³⁷ This report was brought out on the floor by Alexander Gillon (*J. H. R.*, 1783, pp. 272-273, March 8, 1783).

accomplished despite the fact that the coopers told the legislature that even this act as well as others having to do with the governing of slaves was not obeyed "to the great and manifest injury of the mechanics."³⁸

After the incorporation of the city in 1783, the mechanics could better bring direct pressure on the city government. But not until August 1796 was an ordinance ratified preventing slave holders from allowing their slaves to carry on any handicraft "of themselves" under penalty of forfeiting one dollar for every day that the slave carried on the trade. An owner could rent out his slave but was not permitted to have him taught a craft by another slave under the penalty of eighty-five dollars for each offense.

The rest of the ordinance of 1796 solved nothing. One clause is interesting, however. The City Council forced the master craftsmen to keep one white apprentice or journeyman for every four Negroes they employed. The employee class of the craftsmen was thereby placated.³⁹

Later, a more positive move was made to control and limit the hiring out of handicraft slaves by non-mechanics. It required owners to obtain badges at a cost of \$3 per year and forbade non-residents of the city to license their slaves. Those who worked their craftsmen without licenses were liable to a fine of five dollars per day over and above the wages agreed to be paid them. Moreover, no inhabitant of the city was permitted to have more than six slaves for hire unless he should pay threefold in proportion for the license for every slave employed above that number.⁴⁰

The slave laws were not completely satisfactory, but they met the situation as well as might be expected. The mechanics continued to train and sell their Negro artisans to townsmen and planters, and

³⁸ Petition of the Coopers' Society, MS, S. C. Arch.; Cooper, *Statutes*, VII, 408-409.

³⁹ Edwards, *Ordinances*, p. 164.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 193-194. The law kept the planter from employing his Negroes in town, which would cut down competition for the mechanics of Charleston. In the 1840's country dwellers were permitted to obtain licenses for hiring out their slaves in town, but they paid double the price, which was at this time \$7 per handicraft slave.

There is also reason to believe that the badge laws were enforced, since in 1807 a city ordinance directed that the Marshal of Charleston should receive half of the fines imposed on proven offenders against city ordinances (George B. Echard, *A Digest of the Ordinances of the City Council of Charleston* [Charleston, 1844], pp. 21, 176, 161).

then unreasonably desired strict control of their labor. Perhaps the only way in which the mechanics could solve the problem completely was to stop such sales, but they found in them a ready profit and thus persisted in flirting with economic suicide and cutthroat competition for the dollar at hand. They never advocated abolition.

Encouragement to manufacturing was another important program to which the mechanics consistently adhered during the Revolution. They were in hopes of a general tariff law for protection against foreign importations. The legislature itself, in a protective mood, was willing that Congress pass such a law in order to lift the state out of the economic depression which followed the brief postwar boom. South Carolina consented to a general tariff in 1782 and 1784, provided the rest of the states would concur. There was no unanimity, however, and protection was never afforded. It is therefore not surprising to note that in the constitutional convention of 1788 Daniel Cannon, Anthony Toomer, and William Johnson of the mechanics voted "yes" to a stronger plan of government with more powerful control of foreign commerce. Such evidence contradicts the generally accepted statement that the artisans of the American towns were anti-federalist and opposed to the ratification of the constitution. On the day the state convention ratified the new instrument of government, a parade to celebrate the event took place and, of the seventy occupations represented more than half were mechanics, marching by trade behind an outstanding craftsman, their tools decorated.

No sooner had the federal congress begun sessions, than the shipwrights of Charleston, led by Paul Pritchard, memorialized the Congress for Navigation Acts against British mercantilism to raise the shipbuilding industry out of the doldrums. On the necessity for the new constitution, they added that "there wanted but a supreme energetic system, capable of uniting . . . efforts and drawing . . . resources to a point, to render us a great and happy people. This system we trust the wisdom of the general convention has produced, and the Virtue of the people confirmed. Under your able and upright administration of the ample powers it contains, we look forward, with pleasing hopes, to the period when we shall once more see public credit firmly established, private rights se-

cured, and our citizens enjoying the blessings of a mild and active Government."

Requests to the Confederation government had proved virtually worthless, but the state showed more sympathy toward protective measures against foreign importations. The climate of opinion favored the mechanics. Revenue was badly needed in indebted Carolina and retaliation against Britain was politic. Besides, nabobs and democrats alike agreed on the desirability of developing new modes of wealth with the bounty of indigo gone and the rice planter faced with closed markets and damaged or destroyed equipment.

During the Confederation, tariff legislation evidenced rising rates and efforts to protect American manufactures were apparent. As early as 1783, a heavy duty of 2 shillings *ad valorem* was exacted on every barrel of beer imported, and 2½ shillings were imposed generally on all unenumerated importations. By March, 1787, certain manufactures were specifically enumerated. A very high duty of 10% *ad valorem* was imposed on all coaches, chaises, chariots, post-chaises, riding chairs, wrought plate, plated ware, clocks, watches, and jewelry. Cheap readymade clothes, and all leather goods were subjected to a 5% rate. A duty of 3% was placed on all unenumerated items, an increase of ½% above former tariffs. By the end of the Confederation, South Carolina was in a mood to "encourage American manufactures" and its leaders advocated stronger national unity. The manufactures and produce of sister states were never included in the tariffs.⁴¹

⁴¹ In 1783, Ann Timothy reprinted an article from the *Pennsylvania Journal* stating that the mechanic trades and manufacturing should be encouraged by passage of a general duty law (*G. S. S. C.*, November 6, 1783; and articles by "Buckskin" contained a list of goods which could be fashioned by the artisans of the United States if they were encouraged (*P. A.*, August 23, September 8, 1785); other arguments for a general duty law as an aid to manufacturing were voiced (*C. H.*, September 19, 1785). Cooper, *Statutes*, IV, 512-513, 594-596; *Debates . . . in the House of Representatives of South Carolina on the Constitution of the United States . . . Notices of the Convention* (Charleston, 1831), pp. 380, 398.

For the petition of the shipwrights: Walter Lowrie and Matthew St. Clair, eds. *American State Papers, Commerce and Navigation* (2 vol.; Washington, 1832), VII, [sic I] 5.

For reference on tariff policy, see the very excellent article by William Frank Borow, "Tariff Policies in South Carolina, 1775-1789," *S. C. H. [G.] M.*, LVI (January, 1955), 31-44.

The legislature offered additional enducements to the mechanics. Ordinarily the acts of taxation provided a levy on the profits of all faculties, professions, and handicraft trades. In 1784, however, the mechanics were exempted from this part of the tax law. The measure was approved in March, 1784, and probably gave the mechanics additional incentive to end their railing and rioting against the government.⁴²

Many legislators believed that the law was unfair. Since "It relieved one class of men in preference to another." As a result the profits of handicraftsmen were once again taxed in the levy of 1785. Nonetheless, this aid to manufacturing was not surrendered willingly.⁴³

During a meeting of mechanics, merchants, and planters called to discuss the deplorable state of economic affairs in 1785, Dr. John Budd, the rioter of 1778, spoke strongly in favor of a tax exemption for the mechanics. He claimed that it would require very forcible arguments to convince him that the mechanics "ought to undergo any restriction whatever, and he was grounded in this idea from the politic conduct of other nations. Take a view of Great Britain, in what manner had she arisen to be such a flourishing and powerful nation—by a minute attention to her manufactures. That was the source from which she drew abundant riches, and to that part of her natural advantage she made even agriculture, in a great measure subservient . . . purposely that the mechanic may be able to procure the greatest necessary of life on moderate terms." It was to her manufactures that "she owed the advantage of such a balance in her favor in the carrying trade; if her industrious inhabitants did not exert themselves so vigorously, her ships could not have their full employment they had at present."⁴⁴

He continued: "An opinion was held by some that the American manufactures were inferior, but how did this appear? In many articles there was a decided superiority, hats for instance, of American manufacture, had confessedly a superiority; those made here

⁴² Cooper, *Statutes*, IV, 628, 638.

⁴³ Mr. DeSaussure opposed omitting the mechanics from the act (*C. E. G.*, August 15, 1785).

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

stood much higher in point of reputation than any that had been imported. Such articles in the joinery line as were made here ought not to be placed on a level with those imported. Leather was made much cheaper and better than in Europe."

Another importation that he called to the attention of the company was "ready made cloathes; there the superiority was pre-eminent," he maintained, "in favor of this country, so much so as totally to preclude comparison; yet we were eager to buy everything imported, and thus we threw a particular benefit into the hands of foreigners, whilst our own work women were in a state of inactive penury."

He reviewed for his listeners the well-known situation of Spain; how that nation had failed to encourage manufacturing and had thus impoverished herself. He warned further: "In vain would the citizens of this state felicitate themselves on the abundant plenty with which bountiful nature had blessed her, if her exports continued to be inferior to her imports, as at present was unhappily the case. Her rice, her indigo were scarcely national advantages when they were so short toward the national expenditure. We must necessarily reduce our expenditures to narrower limits, and then we should become a powerful and happy country. The learned gentleman observed on the injustice of the tax in a very obvious instance; the wealthy planter payed nothing for fifty barrels of rice, whilst the poor cooper who was employed to drive a few hoops on the barrel was called on to pay a tax of 50 per ann. Was this fair? Was this equitable? Should we impose a discouragement, where we ought to hold out a premium—certainly not." For these reasons he gave his "hearty support" to that legislation which would "relieve the mechanics," of taxation on their profits in trade.⁴⁵

His sentiments were well received by the gathering. A memorial was sent to the legislature, with the result that the mechanics were again exempted from the part of the law taxing profits in trade, a practice which was continued thereafter. In 1790, that there

⁴⁵ *Ibid.* "Joinery-line," i.e., cabinet-making. Perhaps Budd's successful stand is responsible in part for the remarkable growth in the number of these tradesmen between 1790 and 1810. 50 s. *per annum*.

might be no mistake, the word "mechanics" was inserted in the clause providing the same exemptions for clergymen, schoolmasters, and schoolmistresses. Thus the efforts of the Revolutionary artisans provided some compensation for the ante-bellum artisans who lived during a period when agriculture revived and when commerce returned in great measure to its old channels and tradesmen were once again injured by importations.⁴⁶

The labor movement was also foreshadowed by the Revolutionary craftsmen, but until the post war period, there was only one organization in which the artisans discussed their own economic concerns with the possible exception of the Fellowship Society. This was the Master Tailors' Society formed in 1766 under Theodore Trezevant. The war interrupted further progress of craft unionism among the artisans and served a harsh example to them. The severe burdens which the conflict inflicted on business demonstrated to the mechanics more than anything else the need for trade unions.⁴⁷

At the same time, despite the fact that such companies of mechanics were commonplace in Europe, the people and the government were not amenable to the idea of societies of craftsmen. The legislature blamed the tailors, for example, for uniting to monopolize their trade and on these grounds refused them a charter of incorporation.⁴⁸

In the postwar years such prejudices and fears became less pronounced. The planters themselves gathered together in 1784 to discuss their economic affairs, and in the same year the merchants convened once again in the Chamber of Commerce. In August, 1783, the carpenters had united to form the Carpenter's Society under the presidency of Daniel Cannon, and when this group was accused of monopolizing trade and was described as an "insupportable combination," the carpenters answered directly and indignantly: "we . . . beg leave to inform you, that you are at liberty to call us combiners or what you please, the fact is, we are formed

⁴⁶ Cooper, *Statutes*, IV, 729, V, 25, 58, 130, 150, *et passim*.

⁴⁷ Petition of the Master Tailors' Society, MS, S. C. Arch.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

into companies for the management of our concerns, have chose our proper officers, and intend as freemen to support our rights." They added that farmers and lawyers were not "adequate judges of tradesmens concerns."⁴⁹

Perhaps the simple declaration produced results. In 1784 the Master Tailors' Society was finally incorporated, with the help of the legislative committees which included Flagg, Johnson, Toomer, and Sarrazin. In 1786 the wig-makers and barbers joined together in the Barbers' Society, and during this decade the Master Coopers' Society was instituted by the packers and barrel makers of the city. The movement culminated in the formation of the Mechanics' Society in 1794, which admitted "any number of free white Mechanics, Manufacturers, and Handicraftsmen." Anthony Toomer was the first president of this organization.⁵⁰

Strictly speaking, the mechanics' societies were not labor unions in the modern sense. Rather, they resembled combinations of employers. It is probable that the employees were not permitted entrance into most of these unions. Containing nothing about journeymen, the rules of the Barbers' Society only stated that apprentices were not accepted as members. The Carpenters' Society had no similar statement; nevertheless, membership was apparently closed for five years after its inception. In 1783 there were but eleven charter members, and it was not until 1788 that new names appeared on the rolls and they had apparently been journeymen or apprentices in 1783. Furthermore, the rules of the Mechanics' Society provided that no one should be admitted who was under the age of twenty-one. Such a statement forbade admittance to apprentices and possibly journeymen, for if a lad undertook to learn a trade at the age of fourteen, which was usually the case, he would serve four years in apprenticeship and at least three more

⁴⁹ G. A., February 28, 1784; "Centennial of Incorporation, 1783-1883," *Charleston Yearbook*, 1883, pp. 420-421; G. A., October 25, November 22, 1783; G. S. S. C., October 8, 23, 1783.

⁵⁰ The tailors claimed that depreciation had greatly reduced their funds (Petitions of the Master Tailors' Society); see also Petition of the Barbers' Society; Rules of the Barbers' Society; Petition of the Coopers' Society; Petition of the Mechanics' Society; MSS, S. C. Arch.; *Constitution of the Mechanics' Society* (Charleston, 1811). Mechanics' societies were incorporated in Beaufort and Hamburg in 1828 and 1824, respectively (Cooper, *Statutes*, VII, 247, 336, 364).

a journeyman before he was eligible for membership. Only master craftsmen composed the coopers' and tailors' organizations.⁵¹ On the other hand, an employee-labor movement was budding, even in this agricultural society. Particularly was this true where the public was the employer of the artisan's labor rather than the consumer of his goods. In the early 1760's the Grand Jury of Charleston complained that a group of Negro apprentice chimney-sweeps had combined to fix the prices of their labor. In 1783, previously the carpenters, though masters, had united against the masters and townsmen for the primary purpose of raising their wages. They were accused of asking for a uniform wage of \$3 per day, and the arguments and threats which arose certainly assumed the proportions of a struggle between laborers and employers. An additional example was that of the disagreement of the bakers in 1782, with the government of the occupation and again in 1786, under civilian rule. In the latter year, the bakers of Charleston struck against the public when the City Council passed an ordinance fixing the price of bread which, the bakers maintained, was below the price that would support them and their families.⁵²

The result of union was that the wages of labor in Charleston rose. In 1785 the price per day was \$.50; in 1790, \$.60; in 1795, \$.05; and in 1800, \$1.10. In every instance except in 1785, when it was at the same rate, the laborer of Charleston received between 10 and \$.25 more per day than the average laboring man in the United States.⁵³

Unity had the additional benefit of enabling the group to provide compensation to the stricken mechanic's family. Orphaned children were cared for and schooled with society funds. The Barbers' Society even extended aid to sick or injured members in

⁵¹ *Rules of the Charleston Carpenter's Society with a List of Members' Names and Officers, since the Formation of the Society* (Charleston, 1805). Rules of the Barbers' Society; Cooper, *Statutes*, III, 544-546, IV, 540.

⁵² S. C. G., November 5, 1763; G. A., October 25, November 22, 1783. U. B. Phillips, *Plantation and Frontier Documents* (2 vol., Cleveland, 1909), II, 343-344.

⁵³ Department of Labor, "History of Wages in the United States," p. 21. Union and availability of land are the only plausible reasons for high wages. Slavery could not have caused high wages for the multitude of slave laborers and artisans would have had the effect of flooding the labor market and consequently of making the price of labor cheap.

good standing. Of course such functions were not new. This kind of help was offered members of the Fellowship Society in the beginning of the period, and it should be added, that mechanics did not begin the idea; the practice had long been common in England as well as in Charleston.⁵⁴

Craftsmen's societies prospered for the remainder of the 18th Century. Membership in the Carpenters' and the Mechanics' Societies increased, and their funds grew so that they were indeed able to extend to their members the privileges guaranteed by their rules. Holdings in stocks, bonds, and real estate in the Mechanics' Society amounted to more than \$15,000 within a few years. It proved once again that some men of the class were enabled to build their fortunes and standing in their community through their trade, for a large part of the Society's wealth came from the donations of financially successful members.⁵⁵

4. Conclusion: The Significance of the Mechanics

Even at the risk of repetition, some of the salient features of the mechanics' story may be recalled and general conclusions drawn.

For their contributions as artists and craftsmen alone, the artisans of Charleston are worthy of study. They cannot be ignored as industrial artists producing work of utility and beauty and enriching their own times and the present. They were cabinet-makers, teachers, silversmiths, portrait-painters, iron-workers, housewrights and so on who left such magnificent examples of eighteenth century architecture and craftsmanship as seen in the Exchange, the Miles Brewton House, St. Michael's and other landmarks of the present, and in the furniture and silverwork still remaining.

But, by far, their most important activity lay in the economic strength they gave to the Charleston, and consequently the state's, economy and the force they lent to the Revolution in that city.

⁵⁴ Petitions of the Mechanics Society; Petition of the Carpenters' Society; Petition of the Coopers' Society; Rules of the Barbers' Society; Petition of the Master Tailors' Society; *Rules of the Carpenters' Society*; *Constitution of the Mechanics' Society*.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

Unlike the planters and merchants, they opposed mercantilism. The system caused them constant competition with the wares of British manufacturers who flooded Charleston without stint. Their slogan "encouragement to American manufacturers" therefore became a desirable, indeed necessitous, program for them, which was translated into boycotts against Great Britain before the war and after, in protection and other aids. With mercantilism thus a positive impediment to their development, the mechanics became the radical party of revolution. Evidence does not warrant calling the planters, as a group, the radical party. They were in the middle. The planter party only reluctantly accepted independence—two years after the Declaration, fighting a "civil war for the rights of Englishmen" until 1778. Nor is it correct to designate the merchants either as radicals or middle-roaders. The pre-Revolutionary merchant was conservative and at every turn deplored the mechanics' radicalism and sought means—including joining the radicals—to exert their deliberative influence. Under the circumstances one wonders what the outcome would have been had the artisans not been so anti-British.

For several years, mercantilism has been debunked as a cause of revolution in the South. Since the great works of McCrady and those of Oliver Dickerson, the section is generally dismissed as favorably disposed toward the system, and in some respects with good reason, but the unstable imperial policies on money and credit need further exploration. The monetary dictums of the home government were injurious to the mechanics and the planters of Charleston, wherein here is the exception to the generality. This, together with the fact of the artisans' distaste for the system as manufacturers, can only produce the conclusion that mercantilism has been underrated as a cause for revolution and needs to be replaced in proper prospective. Added to this, there is plentiful evidence that very frequently the artisans of Charleston and their radical friends took their cue from artisans of other cities, and their revolutionary leaders looked northward for method and program in opposing the British and mercantilism. One book, it seems, begs another, and it is hoped this one does not depart from the

process. Economic and political studies of the mechanics and the "mobs" of other colonial cities are needed.

On the grounds of the poor money system, which hindered expansion and was the principal cause of pre-revolutionary depression, the artisans united with debt ridden planters and together they brought the province into the revolution. The artisans were not, however, by the nature of their occupations advocates of cheap money. They were, as a rule, creditors for their goods and services and during the period of inflation, shifted to the creditor position and thereafter are found united with the new, young rebel merchants against the planters. Yet, alliance with merchants, who would import manufactures as readily as the older Tory group was not completely natural. It is very apparent that the artisans of Revolutionary Charleston had their own distinct interests and moved from positions and leaders, like Gadsden and Gillon, as readily as the artisan shifted tools for a job. There is very little evidence to indicate that the artisans were used, led, or manouevred by their betters. The party had a mind of its own.

The artisan possessed the vote before the war, provided he paid his property and income taxes. No one dissented, but his position was humble, which is not to say that *he* was necessarily humble. Many had attained wealth without status on the eve of the revolt. He was without class representation, from which achievement of his own desires might come about. The Revolution provided his rise both to political prominence and brought his group to the brink of even greater economic importance by 1789. The Revolution, even in aristocratic Charleston, truly made for "A World Turned Upside Down," when a glazier, a carpenter, a blacksmith, or some "builder of a necessary house" could sit in the councils of the mighty.

In 1783, the mechanics led the Democratic stirrings which quaked the state, resurrecting their purges against Tories and violence against aristocracy. There can be no doubt that "tumult" was one of the principal means employed to gain concessions, and in the post war period, it was as quickly used against the aristocratic party as against the Britishers before the war. The aristocracy, however, stooped to the weapon themselves. For two years after the Revolu-

tion, Charleston became the scene of violent struggle. Defeat, but with the sweetness of concessions in many forms, quelled artisan tumults, which it must be emphasized were not solely anti-Tory agitations, but represented efforts on the part of the mechanics and young merchants to capitalize on their new positions and prevent turning back to the old colonial order. Concessions and the depression, in particular, abated democratic enthusiasms and brought about a spirit of cooperation and conciliation strange to Charleston for twenty years.

In post-war Charleston, study of the mechanics produces puzzlement. How does one apply the term radical? These democrats were very much in favor of the thermidorian reaction, which the constitution has been called, favoring it for their own purposes, chief of which was protection and national control of commerce. In the sense of one of their reasons for revolt, "encouragement to American manufactures" the new national government afforded this better than the Confederation, the state, or certainly the old empire. There is also a hint that the mechanics regarded this new government as much a guardian of their democratic rights as their local governments.

The Charleston mechanics were a unique class in this southern state—urbanites, manufacturers, and skilled laborers in an agrarian society. It is inescapable that they reach their zenith in this period and thereafter decline in importance in the ante-bellum period. Rather than continue their progress to become great manufacturers and laborers, they seem in their same colonial-revolutionary state on the eve of the Civil War. Why?

The broadening of up country representation, in itself the product of the Revolution, tended to reduce the influence of the city in the assembly, and consequently that of the mechanics who numbered thirteen representatives in 1769 in one of the extra legal organs of government and only four or five in the house and senate by 1789. However, the chief reason seems to lie in their own entrance into the planter class. (They were already slave owners.) Their common purchases of land, the cheapest and most plentiful source of investment, cause if not themselves, certainly

their progeny to become planters. The widespread use of cotton after the Confederation made of South Carolina once again a dominantly agrarian minded society, content with the thought that planting was its greatest and only natural source of wealth, and willing to import manufactures from the North and from Great Britain as before. For several years previously in the Revolutionary and Confederation periods, the story is otherwise, the articulate artisans of Charleston are the proof.



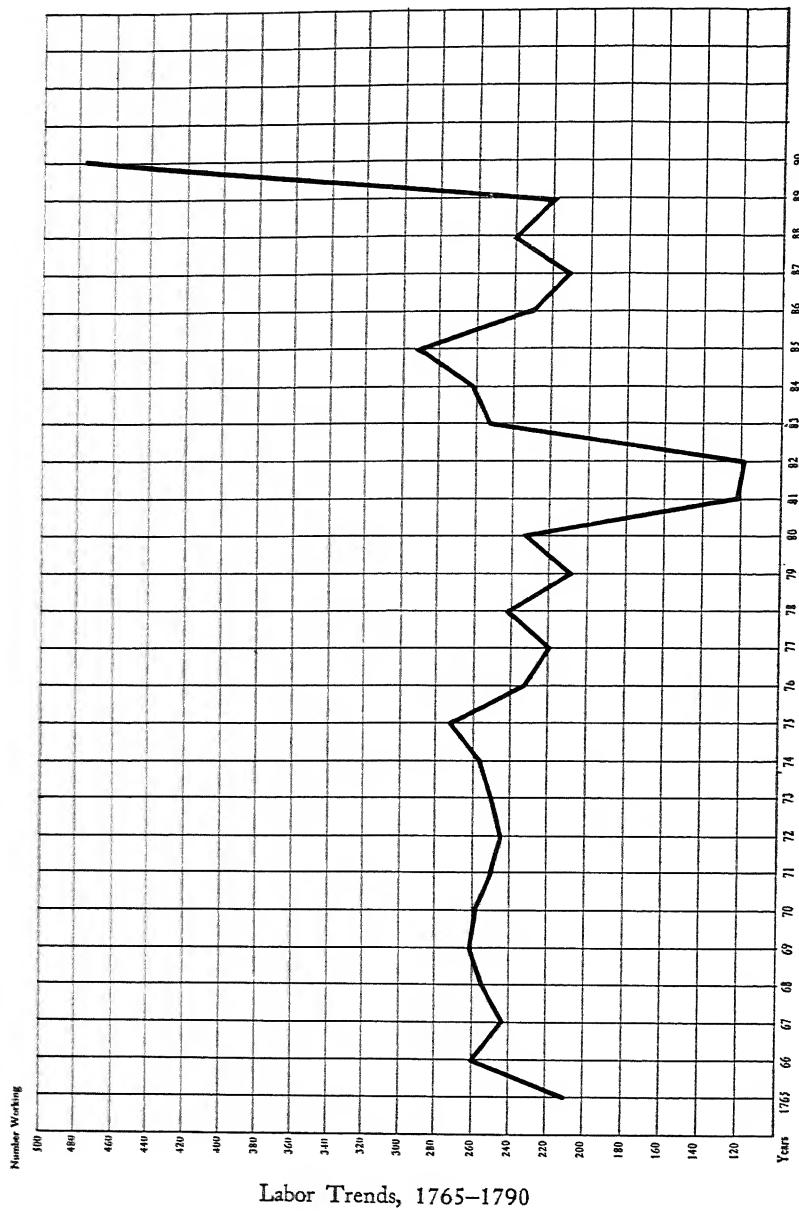
SEAL
OF THE
CHARLESTON MECHANIC
SOCIETY

The mechanics party, it is true, was largely moved by economic and social factors, and they represent one of the keys to understanding the so-called internal social revolution. However, economics do not form the entire picture. The craftsmen made many a sacrifice to principle, their "Good Old Cause of Liberty," particularly during the occupation, which so staggered their unity. As revolutionaries, they fought in their own manner for social and economic privileges and, in the final analysis, for political freedom which is the touchstone of the latter. They were then, as a poet in 1769, possibly Christopher Gadsden himself, expressed it:

Determin'd, to their latest Hour
T' oppose and check despotic power

And in their efforts, the mechanics truly were—Charleston's Sons of Liberty.

APPENDIX



i. LABOR TRENDS, 1765-1790

Although the graph given here is chiefly compiled from newspapers, court and government records, and city directories, all of the sources employed for the entire study have also been used. In view of the fact that few mechanics' business records have survived, the author doubts that these data are free of errors. (The Thomas Elfe Account Book and the David Saylor Receipt Book are the exceptions and these cover but a few years in the period.) A complete labor record of the thousand and more mechanics of Charleston is simply non-existent. This is the reason for entitling the data Labor Trends. However, because of the paucity of labor materials of any kind, either primary or secondary, the graph is offered in hopes that it will be useful, in spite of all its possible inaccuracies.

E. Milby Burton's *South Carolina Silversmiths* and *Charleston Furniture* were useful as checks. In comparison, all of the statistics indicated growth in numbers and employment until the peak of 1790 when wages were high, the depression had ended, and the craftsmen had become prosperous and were in their productive zenith.

For the period 1765-1775, employment appears unsteady but generally high. There are probably two reasons for this. The boycotts created a home market; yet the author must confess that many of the mechanics were "seen" as debtors in the court records, particularly between the years 1768 and 1773, which was hardly a sign of prosperity.

The period after 1775 seems to conform to the historical record. The years of "speculation and monopoly" suggest unsteadiness.

The time of British occupation witnesses a marked decline in *employment*, even though the *Directory of 1782* and the *Royal Gazette* are extant, which might have increased totals but *instead* evidenced few artisans at work. With this ordeal at an end, *the boom and bust* is revealed with recovery beginning late in *the Confederation Period* and reaching the great proportions of *1790*, probably because of the encouragements, so long sought after, *to manufacturing and to the mechanics generally.*

Thus Labor Trends is a "mixed-drink," but it is hoped a *good one.*

The author's graduate assistants at Georgetown, Messrs. *Edward G. Roddy* and *Albert Abbott*, assisted in the mundane task of "counting" from index cards to prepare the annual totals, *from* which Mrs. Gloria Chestang drew the graph.

2. DAILY WAGES, 1710-1783

ABBREVIATIONS

- C. C. P.—Records of the Court of Common Pleas.
 C. S. C.—Milling, *Colonial South Carolina*.
 C. Y.—Charleston Yearbook.
 H. J.—Easterby, *Journal of the Commons House of Assembly, 1739-1741*.
 T. E. A. B.—Thomas Elfe Account Book.

<i>Year</i>	<i>Occupation</i>	<i>Daily Rate of Pay *</i>	<i>Source</i>
1710	Tailors	5 s.	<i>C. S. C.</i> , p. 80
1710	Shoemakers	2 s. 6 d.	<i>Ibid.</i>
1710	Smiths	7 s. 6 d.	<i>Ibid.</i>
1710	Weavers	3 s.	<i>Ibid.</i>
1710	Bricklayers	6 s.	<i>Ibid.</i>
1710	Coopers	4 s.	<i>Ibid.</i>
1710	Carpenters	3 s.—5 s.	<i>Ibid.</i>
1710	Joiners	3 s.—5 s.	<i>Ibid.</i>
1710	Laborers	1 s. 3 d.— 2 s. plus diet & lodging	<i>Ibid.</i>
1740	Carpenters, Masters	£2	<i>H. J.</i> , 428-429
1740	Joiners, Masters	£2	<i>Ibid.</i>
1740	Carpenters, Negroes	£1:5	<i>Ibid.</i>
1740	Carpenters, Appren- tices, White & Black: 1st Year 2nd Year 3rd Year 4th Year	7 s. 6 d. 10 s. 15 s. £1	<i>Ibid.</i>

* All amounts are in currency unless otherwise stated.

Year	Occupation	Daily Rate of Pay *	Source
1740	Bricklayers	£2	<i>Ibid.</i>
1760	Wheelwrights	£1:01:04 plus 4 s. rations	H. J., 1759-1760, p. 218, May 28, 1760; Cooper, <i>Statutes</i> , IV, 238-239, 250.
1760	Wheelwrights	£1:15 plus 4 s. rations	<i>Ibid.</i> H. J., 1759- 1760, p. 275, June 11, 1760.
1760	Blacksmiths	£3 plus 4 s. rations	<i>Ibid.</i>
1766	Carpenters	£1:10 plus £4 s. rations	<i>Ibid.</i> , 1765-1768, p. 136, June 3, 1766.
1766	Blacksmiths	£1 plus 4 s. rations	<i>Ibid.</i>
1766	Wheelwrights	£1:10 plus 4 s. rations	<i>Ibid.</i>
1766	Shinglemakers	7 s. 6 d. plus 4 s. rations	<i>Ibid.</i>
1766	Clerks	£1 requested 6 s. 8 d. received	<i>Ibid.</i> , p. 138.
1766	Laborers	7 s. 6 d. plus 4 s. rations	<i>Ibid.</i> , p. 158, June 16, 1766.
1767	Carpenters, Negroes	£1	C. C. P., 1767-1768, MSS, 224-226.
1768	Saddlers	£1	<i>Ibid.</i> , 1770-1771, MSS, 146-147.

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Year	Occupation	Daily Rate of Pay	Source
1770	Coopers	£1:10	H. J., 1769-1770, p. 400, August 15, 1770.
1771	Cabinet-makers, Employees	£35 [per month]	T. E. A. B.
1772	Cabinet-makers, Employees	£36 [per month]	<i>Ibid.</i>
1773-1774	Carpenters, Journey-men	£1:7:4	G. A., November 1, 1783.
1773-1774	Carpenters, Master	£2:15	<i>Ibid.</i>
1775	Carpenters	15 s.-45 s. and 1 gill rum	C. Y., 1889, p. 172.
1778	Laborers, Negroes	£1 and compensa-tion if hurt	G. S. S. C., December 30, 1778.
1780-1782	Ship-carpenters	13 d.-6 s. sterling	<i>Cruden's Report</i> , pp. 19-20.
1781	Saddlers (Sumter's Troops)	1 Negro, booty, clothing, rations **	J. H. R., 1782, p. 91, February 13, 1782.
1781	Gunsmiths	2 Negroes, booty, clothing, rations **	<i>Ibid.</i>
1782	Carpenters, Negroes	3 s. 6 d. sterling	James Cook, MSS.
1783*	Carpenters, Journeymen	£2:9	G. A., November 1, 1783.
1783*	Carpenters, Masters	£3:5	<i>Ibid.</i>
1783*	Carpenters, Masters	£4:17:6 (rumored)	<i>Ibid.</i> , October 25, 1783.

* Rate of Exchange at £7 sterling for £1 currency.

** For the term of enlistment.

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